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WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

BENTON-OWENS VALLEY BODIE - COLEVILLE STUDY AREAS

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

1987

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICE
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825

WPC3011G

Enclosed is the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas in the Bishop Resource Area and Caliente Resource Area of the Bakersfield District, California. The EIS includes 19 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and analyzes the impacts of adding 298,726 acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Partial Wilderness and No Wilderness Alternatives are also considered. All recommendations contained herein are preliminary and subject to change during administrative review. This Environmental Impact Statement was prepared pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and responds to the mandate of Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to review all public land roadless areas of 5,000 acres of more and roadless islands having wilderness characteristics; determine their suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness designation; and report these suitability recommendations to the President no later than October 21, 1991.

For further information contact: District Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Bakersfield District, 800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 311, Bakersfield, California 93301.

Sincerely,

Ed Hastey

Ed Hastey
State Director

#15300174

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE
BENTON-OWENS VALLEY/BODIE-COLEVILLE STUDY AREAS

CA-010-027	Sacatar Meadows WSA	18,175 Acres
CA-010-055	Cerro Gordo WSA	16,102 Acres
CA-010-056	Southern Inyo WSA	36,600 Acres
CA-010-057	Independence Creek WSA	6,250 Acres
CA-010-062	Crater Mountain WSA	7,260 Acres
CA-010-064	Symmes Creek WSA	8,130 Acres
CA-010-079	Chidago Canyon WSA	20,246 Acres
CA-010-080	Fish Slough WSA	14,450 Acres
CA-010-081	Volcanic Tableland WSA	11,840 Acres
CA-010-082	Casa Diablo WSA	9,167 Acres
CA-010-088	Excelsior WSA	9,100 Acres
CA-010-090	Granite Mountains WSA	54,941 Acres
CA-010-092	Walford Springs WSA	12,250 Acres
CA-010-094	Mormon Meadows WSA	7,280 Acres
CA-010-095	Mt. Biedeman WSA	12,420 Acres
CA-010-099	Bodie Mountains WSA	23,360 Acres
CA-010-100	Bodie WSA	15,455 Acres
CA-010-102	Masonic Mountains WSA	6,600 Acres
CA-010-105/NV-030-531	Slinkard WSA	6,760 Acres

Prepared by
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District Office, California

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS
EAGLE LAKE/CEDARVILLE WSAs

Draft ( ) Final (X) Environmental Impact Statement

1. Type of Action: Administrative ( ) Legislative (X)

2. Abstract:

The Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Resource Area and Caliente Resource Area, Bakersfield District, California, has analyzed the impacts and resource trade-offs of the following proposals for nineteen wilderness study areas (WSA):

Sacatar Meadows WSA	Partial Wilderness
Cerro Gordo WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Southern Inyo WSA	Partial Wilderness
Independence Creek WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Crater Mountain WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Symmes Creek WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Chidago Canyon WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Fish Slough WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Volcanic Tableland WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Casa Diablo WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Excelsior WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Granite Mountains WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Walford Springs WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Mormon Meadows WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Mt. Biedeman WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Bodie Mountains WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Bodie WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Masonic Mountains WSA	No Wilderness/No Action
Slinkard WSA	No Wilderness/No Action

This environmental impact statement also analyzes the impacts and resource trade-offs of other alternatives including all wilderness, partial wilderness, and no wilderness/no action. Wilderness characteristics and special features are examined.

3. Location of Action:

The study areas are generally located east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains south of Lake Tahoe. The WSAs encompass 287,876 acres of public land. An additional 8,510 acres of uninventoried National Forest land are included within the EIS area as a result of the joint wilderness study program between the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service.

4. For Further Information Contact:

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SUMMARY

The Bakersfield District, California of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to determine the suitability of 19 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. These WSAs cover 296,386 acres of public lands. This area includes 8,510 acres of adjacent, uninventoried U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands administered by the Inyo National Forest, under study in accordance with the February 20, 1981, USFS/BLM Cooperative Agreement for joint wilderness studies. Additionally, the area includes 2,830 acres entirely within California that is administered by the BLM's Carson City District, Nevada, that is under joint wilderness study between the Carson City District and the Bakersfield District. The study areas are generally located east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and south of Lake Tahoe. This EIS assesses the environmental consequences of managing these WSAs as wilderness or nonwilderness, and of managing a portion of eleven WSAs as wilderness.

The nineteen WSAs are being studied as amendments to the existing Management Framework Plans (MFPs) for the Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville, South Sierra Foothills, and Reno Planning Areas.

Scoping by the public and within the BLM-identified environmental issues for each WSA related to wilderness designation. The issues generally included concerns regarding impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreational use, impacts on livestock grazing and range improvements, impacts on wildlife habitat management, impacts on watershed management, and impacts on mineral and energy development.

SACATAR MEADOWS WSA (CA-010-027) 18,175 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Sacatar Meadows WSA is Partial Wilderness. Under this proposal 11,447 acres will be designated wilderness while the remaining 6,728 acres will continue to be managed under the existing South Sierra Foothills Management Framework Plan (MFP). Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative which would designate the entire 18,175 acres as wilderness--and a No Wilderness/No Action Alternative which would not designate any of the 18,175-acre WSA as wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Sacatar Meadows WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use and impacts on livestock grazing and range improvements.

CERRO GORDO WSA (CA-010-055) 16,102 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 16,102-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 16,102 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 14,222 acres wilderness and the remaining 1,880 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Cerro Gordo WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on mineral development, impacts on geothermal resource development, and impacts on the Inyo Mountain salamander.

SOUTHERN INYO WSA (CA-010-056) 36,600 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Southern Inyo WSA is Partial Wilderness. Under this proposal 27,420 acres will be designated wilderness while the remaining 9,180 acres will continue to be managed under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative which would designate the entire 36,600 acres as wilderness--and a No Wilderness/No Action Alternative which would not designate any of the 36,600-acre WSA as wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Southern Inyo WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on mineral development, impacts on sensitive plant species, and impacts on the Inyo Mountain salamander.

INDEPENDENCE CREEK WSA (CA-010-057) 6,250 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Independence Creek WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 6,250-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 6,250 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Independence Creek WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, and impacts on livestock grazing and range improvements.

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA (CA-010-062) 7,260

The Proposed Action for the Crater Mountain WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 7,260-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP and under the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 7,260 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 6,165 acres wilderness and the remaining 1,095 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Crater Mountain WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on mineral development, and impacts on cultural resources.

SYMMES CREEK WSA (CA-010-064) 8,130 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Symmes Creek WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 8,130-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the

existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 8,130 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Symmes Creek WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, and impacts on apiary sites.

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA (CA-010-079) 20,246 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Chidago Canyon WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 20,246-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 20,246 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 8,326 acres wilderness and the remaining 11,920 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Chidago Canyon WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on transmission line corridor development, and impacts on the mining of decorative building stone.

FISH SLOUGH WSA (CA-010-080) 14,450 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Fish Slough WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 14,450-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 14,450 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 14,240 acres wilderness and the remaining 210 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Fish Slough WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on transmission line corridor development, and impacts on the mining of decorative building stone.

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA (CA-010-081) 11,840 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Volcanic Tableland WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 11,840-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 11,840 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 10,920 acres wilderness and the remaining 920 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Volcanic Tableland WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on transmission line corridor development, and impacts on the mining of decorative building stone.

CASA DIABLO WSA (CA-010-082) 9,167 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Casa Diablo WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 9,167-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP and Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 9,167 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Casa Diablo WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, and impacts on transmission line corridor development.

EXCELSIOR WSA (CA-010-088) 9,100 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Excelsior WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 9,100-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 9,100 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Excelsior WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, and impacts on geothermal resource development.

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-090) 54,941 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Granite Mountains WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 54,941-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Benton Owens Valley and Bodie-Coleville MFPs and the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 54,941 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 35,981 acres wilderness and the remaining 18,960 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Granite Mountains WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on livestock grazing and range improvements, impacts on mineral development, impacts on geothermal resource development, and impacts on cultural resources.

WALFORD SPRINGS WSA (CA-010-092) 12,250 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Walford Springs WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 12,250-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 12,250 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Walford Springs WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, and impacts on geothermal resource development.

MORMON MEADOWS WSA (CA-010-094) 7,280 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Mormon Meadows WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 7,280-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 7,280 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Mormon Meadows WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, and impacts on geothermal resource development.

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA (CA-010-095) 12,420 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Mt. Biedeman WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 12,420-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 12,420 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 9,300 acres wilderness and the remaining 3,120 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Mt. Biedeman WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on geothermal resource development, impacts on recreational facilities development (Bodie State Historic Park), impacts on the realignment of State Route 270, and impacts on sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting habitat.

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-099) 23,360 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Bodie Mountains WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 23,360-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 23,360 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 9,790 acres wilderness and the remaining 13,570 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Bodie Mountains WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on geothermal resource development, impacts on cultural resources, and impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.

BODIE WSA (CA-010-100) 15,455 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Bodie WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 15,455-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. Two alternatives were also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 15,455 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness--and a Partial Wilderness Alternative designating 6,945 acres wilderness and the remaining 8,510 acres as nonwilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Bodie WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on geothermal resource development, impacts on cultural resources, and impacts on crucial deer and pronghorn antelope fawning.

MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-102) 6,600 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Masonic Mountain WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 6,600-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 6,600 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Masonic Mountains WSA include impacts on wilderness values, impacts on motorized recreation use, impacts on mineral development, impacts on geothermal resource development, and impacts on potential of the Bridgeport Indian Colony expansion.

SLINKARD WSA (CA-010-105/NV-030-531) 6,760 Acres

The Proposed Action for the Slinkard WSA is No Wilderness/No Action. Under this proposal none of the 6,760-acre WSA will be designated wilderness. The WSA will continue to be managed for multiple use under the existing Bodie-Coleville MFP and the Walker Resource Management Plan. One alternative was also considered--an All Wilderness Alternative in which all 6,760 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness.

Issues analyzed for the Slinkard WSA include impacts on wilderness values and impacts on motorized recreation use.

A scenario of management actions for the Proposed Action and alternatives for each WSA was developed. The environmental consequences were analyzed for each WSA based on the scenarios of management actions. A summary table of impacts for the Proposed Action and alternatives for each WSA is included in Chapter 2 following the discussion of management actions for each WSA.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) considers the possible consequences of wilderness designation, partial designation and nondesignation of nineteen Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the Caliente and Bishop Resource Areas of the Bakersfield District, California and the Walker Resource Area, Carson City District, Nevada. The WSAs studied in this EIS include:

WSA No.	WSA Name	Size (acres)	County	BLM Resource Area
CA-010-027	Sacatar Meadows	18,175	Tulare/Inyo	Caliente
CA-010-055	Cerro Gordo	16,102	Inyo	Bishop
CA-010-056	Southern Inyo	36,600	Inyo	Bishop
CA-010-057	Independence Creek	6,250	Inyo	Bishop
CA-010-062	Crater Mountain	7,260*	Inyo	Bishop
CA-010-064	Symmes Creek	8,130*	Inyo	Bishop
CA-010-079	Chidago Canyon	20,246	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-080	Fish Slough	14,450	Inyo/Mono	Bishop
CA-010-081	Volcanic Tableland	11,840	Inyo/Mono	Bishop
CA-010-082	Casa Diablo	9,167*	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-088	Excelsior	9,100	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-090	Granite Mountains	54,941	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-092	Walford Springs	12,250	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-094	Mormon Meadows	7,280	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-095	Mt. Biedeman	12,420	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-099	Bodie Mountains	23,360	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-100	Bodie	15,455	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-102	Masonic Mountains	6,600	Mono	Bishop
CA-010-105/ NV-030-531	Slinkard	6,760**	Mono/Alpine	Bishop/ Walker

* Acreage includes adjacent uninventoried Inyo National Forest-administered lands that are being studied in accordance with the February 20, 1981, Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management Cooperative Agreement for joint wilderness studies.

** Area under joint wilderness study between Carson City District, Nevada and Bakersfield District, California, with Bakersfield District the lead agency. The lands administered by the Carson City District are entirely within California.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

The purpose of the proposals is to set forth the management action for the nineteen WSAs in the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area. This evolves from a requirement included by Congress in Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directing the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to review roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more having wilderness characteristics and by 1991 to recommend to the President the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness. In determining these wilderness values, the law directs the Bureau to use the criteria given by Congress in the Wilderness Act of 1964. In Section 2(c) of the Act, Congress states that wilderness is essentially an area of undeveloped Federal land in a natural condition, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

THE WILDERNESS REVIEW PROCESS AND ITS INTEGRATION WITH PLANNING

To accomplish the mandate of Section 603 of FLPMA, the BLM developed a wilderness review process containing three phases: inventory, study, and reporting.

The inventory phase of this process, initiated in 1978, involved examining the public lands to determine and locate the existence of areas containing wilderness characteristics that met the criteria established in the Wilderness Act. Areas clearly lacking wilderness characteristics were sorted out from lands that might have those characteristics. This intensive inventory was then followed by a 90-day public review period, after which final WSAs were identified.

This inventory process and a general description of all of California's WSAs are given in Wilderness: Final Intensive Inventory, Public Lands Administered by BLM California Outside the California Desert Conservation Area (1979). A copy of this publication is available at any BLM office.

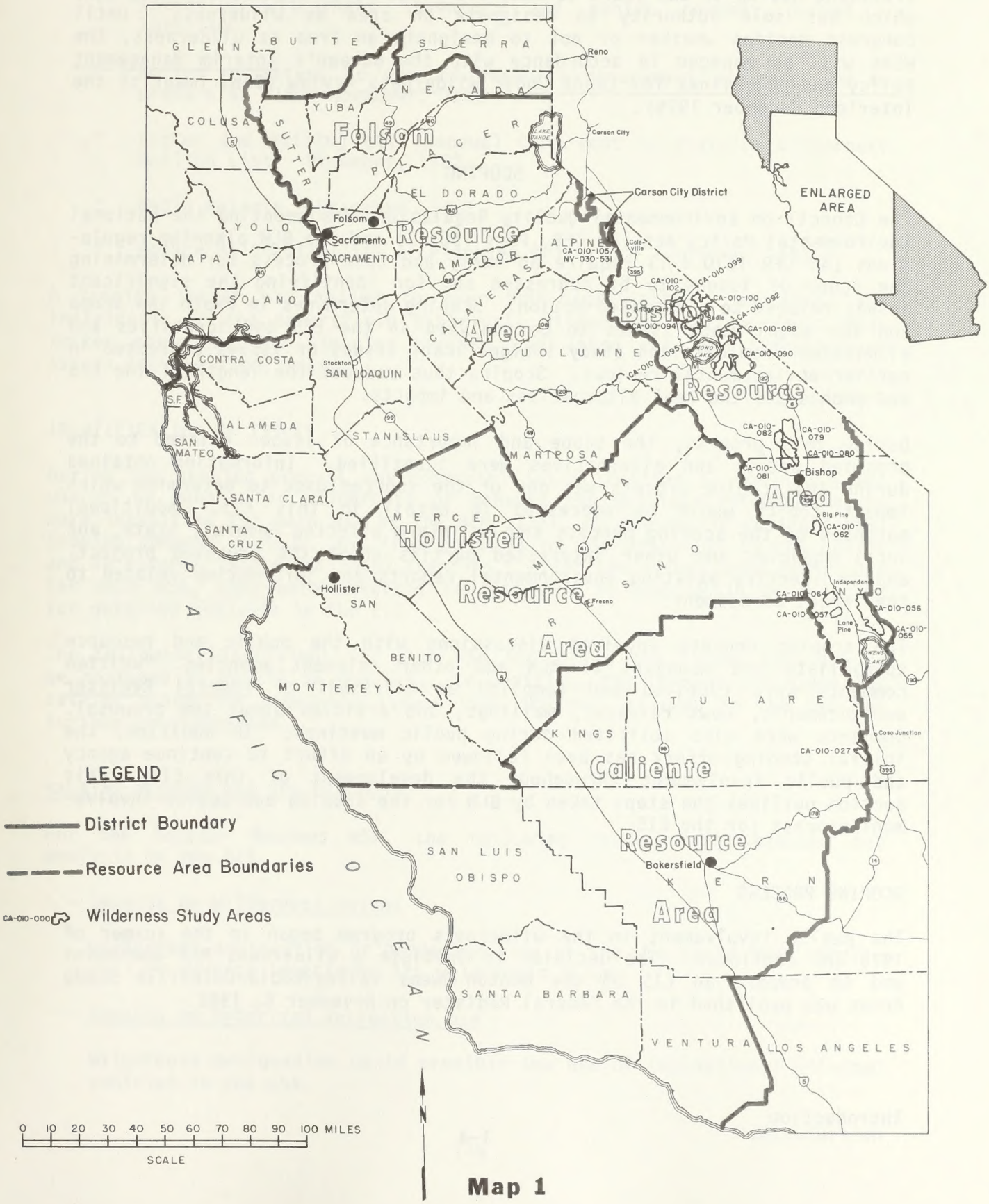
The second step in the review process was to integrate wilderness evaluation into the BLM Planning System (43 CFR 1600), which, in this case, involved amendments to Management Framework Plans (MFPs) for the Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville, South Sierra Foothills, and Reno Planning Areas. The wilderness study criteria and quality standards containing the BLM's Wilderness Study Policy: Policies, Criteria and Guidelines for Conducting Wilderness Studies on Public Lands (47 CFR 5098-5122) were applied to each WSA.

In addition to the above referenced criteria and standards, issues for discussion were identified through public comment, and internal scoping, conflicts were analyzed and alternatives developed. See page ___ for a discussion of which alternatives were selected and why. These alternatives are the basis for analysis of environmental consequences and resource trade-offs.

Benton-Owens Valley / Bodie-Coleville
WILDERNESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LOCATION MAP

Bakersfield District



Map 1

Following public review of the draft environmental impact statement, the Bakersfield District, with State Director concurrence, prepared a final environmental impact statement and wilderness study report. These were reviewed by the BLM Director and the Secretary of the Interior, who filed this final EIS and who will make a recommendation to the President. The President has up to two years to make his final recommendation to Congress, which has sole authority to designate an area as wilderness. Until Congress decides whether or not to designate an area as wilderness, the WSAs will be managed in accordance with the Bureau's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (Department of the Interior, December 1979).

SCOPING

The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR, Part 1501.7) and the BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-1) require an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. Scoping determines in depth the scope and the significant issues to be analyzed in the EIS and identifies and eliminates from detailed study insignificant issues or issues addressed in earlier environmental reviews. Scoping thus reduces the length of the EIS and emphasizes the real alternatives and impacts.

During this process, the scope and importance of issues related to the proposed action and alternatives were identified. Information obtained during the scoping process was one of the sources used to determine which impact topics would be addressed in detail in this EIS. Additional purposes of the scoping process are to inform affected Federal, state, and local agencies and other interested parties about the proposed project, and to identify existing environmental reports and information related to the impact assessment.

The scoping process involved discussions with the public and resource specialists and managers of BLM and other relevant agencies. Written comments were received and compiled as a result of Federal Register announcements, news releases, mailings, and articles about the proposal. Comments were also solicited during public meetings. In addition, the initial scoping effort has been followed by an effort to continue agency and public involvement throughout the development of this EIS. This section outlines the steps taken by BLM for the scoping and public involvement process for the EIS.

SCOPING PROCESS

The public involvement in the wilderness program began in the summer of 1978 and continues. The decision to initiate a Wilderness MFP Amendment and to prepare an EIS on the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas was published in the Federal Register on November 5, 1982.

The scoping process for the EIS area involved several phases, extending from the summer of 1978 to December 1982:

- Initial wilderness inventory and public comment period - 1978-1979.
- Intensive wilderness inventory and public comment period - 1979-1980.
- Notice of Intent to conduct resource management planning and to prepare an EIS - November, 1982.
- Letter and Mailing List Renewal Card sent to District Wilderness Mailing List - December, 1982.
- Media Release - December, 1982.
- Notice of Availability of Planning Criteria - February, 1983.

A scoping letter was mailed to over 900 organizations, agencies, and individuals on the Bakersfield District's Wilderness Mailing List. This letter explained the planning process and asked for identification of issues for the study areas.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

During the scoping process environmental issues related to whether a WSA was to be managed as wilderness or managed for multiple resource values were identified for each WSA by the BLM staff, by the public during formal scoping comment periods, and from comments on the draft EIS by the public and by Federal, State and local agencies. After the issues were identified for each WSA, they were assessed to determine if they would be selected for detailed analysis in the EIS.

The following discussions for each WSA identified the issues that are to be analyzed in detail in the EIS. In addition, the reasons are given for setting aside the remaining issues that are not included in the EIS for further consideration.

SACATAR MEADOWS WSA (CA-010-027)

For the Sacatar Meadows WSA, the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  Wilderness designation or nondesignation of the WSA could have beneficial or adverse impacts on its wilderness values.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit the use of recreational off-road vehicles in the WSA.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

  Wilderness designation would preclude planned vegetation manipulations to increase forage production and grazing use levels.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  There are no significant changes from the existing levels of use projected for the WSA, primarily livestock use and recreational ORV use. The influence of any of the management actions on water quality in the WSA would be negligible and does not constitute a need for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  Currently no mining claims, mineral leases or lease applications exist in the WSA. Overall the WSA has a low mineral potential including a zero potential for oil and gas. Although the WSA does have a moderate potential for uranium, rugged terrain, remote location, ore deposit characteristics and poor market conditions result in a low development potential. Existing information indicates the presence of small obscure mineral deposits, unlikely to be economically developed in the foreseeable future. Therefore, with no projected mining activities, impacts of wilderness designation on mineral development are not considered for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Management of the Monache Mule Deer Herd

  The Monache deer herd is cooperatively managed under the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area agreement with the California Department of Fish and Game. The intent of the agreement is to maintain the habitat in public ownership, and provide monitoring of the mule deer herd and other upland game species. There are no habitat management projects anticipated within the WSA. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation or nondesignation on management of the Monache deer herd is not considered an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Sensitive Plant Species

  The southern portion of the WSA contains habitat and two known populations of Phacelia novenmillensis, a sensitive plant considered a candidate species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There are no projected management actions for this portion of the WSA and no ORV use occurs within the habitat area due to the designation that limits ORV use to existing routes. Therefore, the impact on sensitive plant species is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  Although the Sacatar Meadows WSA has a high sensitivity for archaeological sites including a trade route that passed over the crest of the Sierras through Sacatar Canyon, there are no projected management actions with surface disturbing activities that would create a potential for adverse impacts. Additionally, ORV use of the area is restricted to existing routes and trails as part of the ORV designation prescribed in the South Sierra Foothills ORV Management Plan/EA.

CERRO GORDO WSA (CA-010-055)

The issues selected for analysis are as follows for the Cerro Gordo WSA.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  Wilderness designation or nondesignation of the WSA could have beneficial or adverse impacts on its wilderness values.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  Minerals exploration and development could be precluded in the WSA as a result of wilderness designation. This primarily affects the potential development of a silver mine in the western portion of the WSA.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  Exploration and development of potential geothermal resources in the WSA particularly in the southwest portion where potential is considered high would be precluded under wilderness designation.

- Impacts on the Inyo Mountain Salamander

  Wilderness designation or nondesignation could adversely or beneficially impact the Inyo Mountain salamander which is considered a candidate species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from further analysis follows.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  Although upper elevations of the WSA along the crest of the Inyo Mountains has a high sensitivity for cultural resources, there are no projected management actions in this portion of the WSA that could adversely impact cultural resources. Additionally, the only projected

cultural resource management actions include small, informal interpretive signs and trail markers along the Saline Valley salt tram that could be located on public lands outside the WSA. Therefore, this was not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has expressed concern that activities occurring in the Cerro Gordo WSA without wilderness designation could contribute to impacts on water quality. Management actions are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS to identify the extent of potential impact causing activities such as mineral development and geothermal development that could occur in the WSA. These activities are the result of planning projections only and are not described in the detail that would be required in a plan of operations or for processing a permit. It is not anticipated that any of these projected activities would occur adjacent to or in close proximity to perennial streams or water sources. Since various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal law, the issue of impacts on water quality is not considered in detail in the EIS. Additionally, there is no significant increase projected for motorized recreation use that would contribute to additional water quality impacts.

- Impacts on the Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep

The reintroduction of bighorn sheep in the Cerro Gordo WSA would be independent of wilderness designation or nondesignation. Reintroduction of native species is permissible and the Wilderness Management Policy provides guidelines for the reestablishment and management of native species as part of the wilderness resource.

- Impacts on Sensitive Plant Species

There are two U.S. Fish and Wildlife candidate species, Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis occurring within the WSA. Both plants occur along the eastern boundary of the WSA near the crest of the Inyo Mountains. None of the projected surface-disturbing activities including mining and geothermal development are located in this portion of the WSA. The WSA is not authorized for grazing and no increase is projected for motorized recreation use which generally does not occur within the plant habitat vicinities. It is unlikely that any projected management actions would affect these species. Therefore, an issue concerning sensitive plant species is not included in the EIS for detailed analysis.

SOUTHERN INYO WSA (CA-010-056)

For the Southern Inyo WSA, the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Southern Inyo WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  Minerals exploration and development could be precluded in the WSA as a result of wilderness designation. The development of a silver mine could potentially occur in the southern portion of the WSA which may be affected by wilderness designation or nondesignation.

- Impacts on the Inyo Mountain Salamander

  The Inyo Mountain salamander is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species that could be beneficially or adversely impacted by wilderness designation or nondesignation of the WSA.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from further analysis follows.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  The WSA is generally considered to have a low potential for geothermal resources although small areas along the west edge have a moderate potential. The development potential is low throughout the WSA. There are no leases or lease applications in the WSA and there has been no industry interest expressed in the general area. Therefore, this is not considered as an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Bristlecone Pine

  The WSA supports a subalpine forest that includes bristlecone pine. This unique forest is in a highly remote and inaccessible area. Since the forest trend is considered stable and there are no projected management actions that would affect the bristlecone pine, wilderness designation or nondesignation would not lead to any significant benefits or adverse impacts. In addition, the forest is under protective status while under evaluation for ACEC designation. Therefore, this is not an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

While development of interpretive facilities within would be precluded under wilderness designation, all proposed projects could be constructed outside the WSA and remain effective. The proposed facilities are small and informal in nature including interpretive signs and trail markers. Therefore, wilderness designation of the area is not considered to have any adverse impacts on cultural resource management and this is not an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has expressed concern that activities occurring in the Southern Inyo WSA without wilderness designation could contribute to impacts on water quality. Management actions are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS to identify the extent of potential impact causing activities such as development of a silver mine that could occur in the WSA. These activities are the result of planning projections only and are not described in the detail that would be required in a plan of operations or for processing a permit. It is not anticipated that mineral development activities would occur adjacent to or in close proximity to perennial streams or water sources. Since various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal law, the issue of impacts on water quality is not considered in detail in the EIS. Additionally, there is no significant increase projected for ORV use that would contribute to additional water quality impacts.

- Impacts on the Reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep

The reintroduction of bighorn sheep in the Southern Inyo WSA would be independent of wilderness designation or nondesignation. Reintroduction of native species is permissible and the Wilderness Management Policy provides guidelines for the reestablishment and management of native species as part of the wilderness resource.

INDEPENDENCE CREEK WSA (CA-010-057)

For the Independence Creek WSA, the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

The wilderness values of the Independence Creek WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement

  Wilderness designation would preclude prescribed burning in the WSA to increase livestock forage by 100 AUMs.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from further analysis follows.

- Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

  Wildlife and vegetation inventories, and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Independence Creek WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  The Independence Creek WSA has a low potential for metallic minerals with a very low to low development potential. Although there is a moderate potential for sand and gravel the development potential is low due to the ample availability of deposits outside the WSA and the unknown quality of the material in the WSA. Additionally, there is no potential for oil and gas in the WSA. Therefore, an issue relating to mineral development is not included for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Crucial Deer Winter Habitat

  The western half of the WSA is crucial winter habitat for the Goodale mule deer herd. Since there are no management actions planned for this portion of the WSA, there are no projected impacts that would diminish either the quality or availability of habitat. Therefore, impacts on crucial deer winter habitat is not considered an issue for further analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  The WSA has a high sensitivity for cultural sites; primarily temporary camps, however, there are no management actions projected that would result in adverse impacts to potential cultural sites that could exist in the WSA. There are no cultural resource management actions including interpretation and excavation planned for the WSA. Therefore, impacts on cultural resources is not included in the EIS for detailed analysis.

- Impacts on Tule Elk Habitat and Mule Deer Winter Habitat

  The entire Independence Creek WSA is considered habitat for tule elk with the western half being crucial winter habitat for the Goodale mule deer herd. There are no management actions for the WSA that would result in surface disturbance that would diminish the availability or quality of the habitat. Since the prescribed burn projected for livestock use would result in a conversion of decadent blackbrush

stands to more desirable browse species, an additional benefit would be improved habitat for both the tule elk and the mule deer. Therefore, this is not an issue considered for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  There are no surface disturbing activities projected for the WSA. A prescribed burn proposed to increase livestock forage on 1,800 acres would retain riparian habitat and maintain a 150-foot buffer along George Creek to minimize potential impacts on water quality. Additionally, motorized recreation use is expected to remain stable and is designated to existing routes and trails. Therefore, impacts on water quality is not included as an issue for analysis in the EIS.

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA (CA-010-062)

The issues selected for the Crater Mountain WSA to be analyzed in the EIS are as follows.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Crater Mountain WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  Minerals exploration and development could be precluded in the WSA as a result of wilderness designation. Of primary concern is a moderate potential for metallic minerals which is projected to result in development of an underground gold mine.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  Development of mineral resources in the southern portion of the WSA could conflict with known cultural sites including petroglyph sites.

The following additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from further analysis follows.

- Impacts on Threatened or Endangered Species

  Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Crater Mountain WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Management

  Livestock use would continue to be allotted at the current 293 AUMs under wilderness designation or nondesignation. Since there are no projected changes in use levels and no proposed projects, an issue relating to livestock grazing and range management is not included in the EIS.

- Impacts on Geothermal Development

  The WSA is considered to have a moderate potential for occurrence of geothermal resources. However, based on a lack of a readily identifiable geothermal resource and a lack of industry related interest, the development potential is low. Therefore, an issue concerning geothermal resources is not considered for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has expressed concern that activities occurring in the Crater Mountain WSA without wilderness designation could contribute to impacts on water quality. Management actions are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS to identify the extent of potential impact causing activities including development of an underground gold mine that could occur in the WSA. These activities are the result of planning projections only and are not described in the detail that would be required in a plan of operations or for processing a permit. It is not anticipated that any of these projected activities would occur adjacent to or in close proximity to perennial streams or water sources. Since various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal law, the issue of impacts on water quality is not considered in detail in the EIS. Additionally, there is no significant increase projected for motorized recreation use that would contribute to water quality impacts.

SYMMES CREEK WSA (CA-010-064)

The issues selected for the Symmes Creek WSA to be analyzed in the EIS are as follows.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Symmes Creek WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Apiary Sites

  Wilderness designation would require the three apiary sites in the southern portion of the WSA to be removed. Due to spatial requirements, few opportunities exist to relocate the apiary sites outside the WSA.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from further analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 210 AUMs for sheep and cattle throughout the WSA under wilderness or nonwilderness designation. The only projects proposed are three spring developments which would be permissible under wilderness designation. Therefore, impacts on livestock grazing is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mule Deer Winter Habitat

  The WSA contains crucial winter habitat for the Goodale mule deer herd in the western one-half of the WSA. There are no management actions that would result in surface disturbance within the wintering area except for the development of two water sources. Motorized vehicle use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails. Therefore, no change is anticipated that would diminish the amount or quality of crucial winter habitat. An issue concerning mule deer winter habitat is not considered for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mineral Resource Development

  The WSA is considered to have a low potential for metallic minerals. While there is a moderate potential for occurrence of nonmetallic minerals specifically sand and gravel, the development potential is low due to the unknown quality of this material in the WSA and the ample availability throughout the vicinity outside the WSA. There is no potential for oil and gas. Additionally there are no mining claims in the WSA. Therefore, development of mineral resources is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

  Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Symmes WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  While the predicted cultural sensitivity of the WSA is moderate to high there are no significant surface-disturbing activities projected that could result in adverse impacts to potential sites. Motorized

vehicle use in the WSA is limited to designated routes and trails, limiting potential impacts due to continued use. Since wilderness designation or nondesignation would not result in significantly different management of the WSA and its cultural sites, this issue is not analyzed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

There are no projected changes in existing levels of use in the WSA that would potentially lead to adverse or beneficial impacts on water quality. Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 210 AUMs and motorized recreation use is expected to remain stable at 500 visitor days. Additionally motorized recreation use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails. Therefore, this issue is not considered for detailed analysis in the EIS.

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA (CA-010-079)

For the Chidago Canyon WSA, the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

The wilderness values of the Chidago Canyon WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

A half-mile-wide utility corridor runs along 4½ miles of the WSA's west boundary. One-quarter mile of this width is within the WSA and would not be available for development under wilderness designation. Currently there is a high demand for use of this corridor.

- Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Wilderness designation would preclude mining in the WSA for Bishop tuff, a lithified ash used as a decorative building stone.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Mineral Development Other Than Decorative Building Stone

The WSA has a moderate potential for occurrence and development of metallic minerals particularly gold, in the western quarter. A determination of valid existing rights is anticipated for the mining claim that covers this particular area. With valid existing rights the projected gold mining operation would occur with or without wilderness designation. Development activities are described in Chapter 2 and assessed in terms of related impacts. Additionally, the potential for oil and gas in the WSA is considered to be low. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation on mineral development is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

The WSA is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal interest. However there is a general lack of industry interest in this area and no exploration, leases or lease application exist. Development potential is considered to be low and does not indicate that exploration or development would occur in the foreseeable future. Therefore, impacts on geothermal development are not addressed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing would continue to be allotted at the current use level of 908 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. The only proposed projects, two water developments and a 5-mile allotment boundary fence, would be permitted under wilderness or nonwilderness designation. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation on livestock grazing is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Chidago Canyon WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mule Deer Winter Habitat

The western portion of the WSA contains crucial mule deer winter habitat. The only management action with the potential to impact this area is a projected underground gold mine that would occur with or without wilderness designation. Motorized recreation use in the WSA is designated as limited to existing or designated routes and trails none of which occur within this portion of the WSA. Therefore, wilderness designation or nondesignation would not vary activities within this portion of the WSA sufficiently to affect the quality or availability of the winter habitat. Impacts on mule deer habitat are not an issue for further analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

Although portions of the WSA are considered to have a high sensitivity for cultural resources, the majority of the WSA, particularly the open upland areas has a low sensitivity for the location of cultural sites. Projected surface-disturbing activities including transmission line development and mining of decorative building stone would occur outside the areas with a high sensitivity for cultural sites resulting in a limited potential for impacts. Therefore, impacts to cultural resources as a result of wilderness designation or nondesignation is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has expressed concern that activities occurring in the Chidago Canyon WSA without wilderness designation could contribute to impacts on water quality. Management actions are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS to identify the extent of potential impact causing activities such as the underground gold mine and a small quarry for decorative building stone that could occur in the WSA. These activities are the result of planning projections only and are not described in the detail that would be required in a plan of operations or for processing a permit. It is not anticipated that any of these projected activities would occur adjacent to or in close proximity to perennial streams or water sources. Additionally, the underground gold mine would occur independent of wilderness designation or nondesignation as a result of valid existing rights. Since various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal law, the issue of impacts on water quality is not considered in detail in the EIS. Additionally, there are no significant increases projected for grazing use levels or motorized recreation use that would contribute to additional water quality impacts.

FISH SLOUGH WSA (CA-010-080)

The issues selected for the Fish Slough WSA to be analyzed in the EIS are as follows.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

The wilderness values of the Fish Slough WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

  A half-mile-wide utility corridor runs along 2¼ miles of the WSA's western boundary with the Casa Diablo WSA (CA-010-082). One quarter mile of this width is within the WSA and would not be available for development under wilderness designation. Currently there is a high demand to use this corridor. Additionally, the remaining quarter-mile width of the corridor lies within the Casa Diablo WSA.

- Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

  Wilderness designation would preclude mining in the WSA for Bishop tuff, a lithified ash used as a decorative building stone.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Mineral Development Other Than Decorative Building Stone

  The WSA has a low potential for metallic minerals, no potential for oil and gas, and very low potential for uranium and thorium. Additionally, mineral development potential is considered to be low. Therefore, wilderness designation or nondesignation is not anticipated to affect mineral development and is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  The WSA is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal interest. However there is a general lack of industry interest in this area and no exploration, leases or lease application exist. Development potential is considered to be low and does not indicate that exploration or development would occur in the foreseeable future. Therefore, impacts on geothermal development are not addressed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  Although portions of the WSA are considered to have a high sensitivity for cultural resources, the majority of the WSA, particularly the open upland areas, has a low sensitivity for the location of cultural sites. Projected surface-disturbing activities including transmission line development and mining of decorative building stone would occur outside the areas with a high sensitivity for cultural sites resulting in a limited potential for impacts. Therefore, impacts to cultural resources as a result of wilderness designation or nondesignation is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock grazing would continue to be allotted at the current use level of 377 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. A proposed one-mile fence in the southern portion of the WSA could be constructed independent of designation. Therefore, impacts on livestock grazing are not addressed as an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  There are no projected changes in levels of use in the WSA that would potentially lead to adverse of beneficial impacts on water quality. Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 377 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. While recreational motor vehicle use would increase from the existing 350 visitor days to 550 visitor days this use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails. Quarry sites for Bishop tuff typically are not located along drainage or perennial streams. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation or nondesignation on water quality is not addressed as an issue in the EIS.

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA (CA-010-081)

For the Volcanic Tableland WSA the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Volcanic Tableland WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

  A half-mile-wide utility corridor runs along and extends one-quarter of a mile into the WSA along 6 miles of the western boundary. The portion of the corridor in the WSA would not be available for development under wilderness designation. Currently there is a high demand for use of this corridor.

- Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

  Wilderness designation would preclude mining in the WSA for Bishop tuff, a lithified ash used as a decorative building stone.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock grazing would continue to be allotted at the current use level of 741 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. The three water developments that are proposed for the WSA would be permitted under wilderness or nonwilderness designation. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation on livestock grazing is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  The WSA is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal interest. However there is a general lack of industry interest in this area and no exploration, leases or lease application exist. Development potential is considered to be low and does not indicate that exploration or development would occur in the foreseeable future. Therefore, impacts on geothermal development are not addressed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  Although portions of the WSA are considered to have a high sensitivity for cultural resources, the majority of the WSA, particularly the open upland areas has a low sensitivity for the location of cultural sites. Projected surface-disturbing activities including transmission line development and mining of decorative building stone would occur outside the areas with a high sensitivity for cultural sites resulting in a limited potential for impacts. Therefore, impacts to cultural resources as a result of wilderness designation or nondesignation is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

  Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Volcanic Tableland WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  There are no projected changes in the levels of use in the WSA that would potentially lead to adverse or beneficial impacts on water quality. Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 741 AUMs. While motorized recreational use would increase from the existing 300 visitor days to a projected 500 days this use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails. Quarry sites for Bishop tuff typically are not located along drainages or perennial streams. Therefore, the impacts of wilderness designation or nondesignation on water quality are not addressed as an issue in the EIS.

CASA DIABLO WSA (CA-010-082)

For the Casa Diablo WSA the issues selected for analysis in the EIS are as follows.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Casa Diablo WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

  A half-mile-wide utility corridor runs along 5 miles of the WSA's eastern boundary. One-quarter mile of this width extends into the WSA and would not be available for development under wilderness designation. Currently there is high demand to use this corridor. Along 2¼ miles of the boundary the remaining quarter-mile corridor extends into the Volcanic Tableland WSA.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  The Casa Diablo WSA has a high mineral potential for gold and silver. It is anticipated that a determination of valid existing rights would result in mining activity with or without wilderness designation. Since mining would continue under wilderness designation this is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS. However, impacts on wilderness values associated with mining will be addressed.

- Impacts on Geothermal Development

  The WSA is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal interest. However there is a general lack of industry interest in this area and no exploration, leases or lease application exist. Development potential is considered to be low and does not indicate that exploration or development would occur in the foreseeable future. Therefore, impacts on geothermal development are not addressed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

Livestock use within the WSA would continue to be allotted at the current 144 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. There are no existing livestock improvements and none are proposed. Additionally, there are no proposed increases in livestock grazing use levels. Therefore, there would be no impacts on livestock grazing as a result of wilderness designation.

- Impacts on Crucial Deer Winter Habitat

The northern half of the WSA provides a portion of crucial winter habitat for the Casa Diablo mule deer herd. Mining activities within the WSA could diminish the availability and quality of this habitat. However, valid existing rights are anticipated to permit mining to continue if the WSA were to be designated wilderness. Wilderness designation or nondesignation would not result in a significant change in the mineral development activities within the WSA. Therefore, this is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has expressed concern that activities occurring in the Casa Diablo WSA without wilderness designation could contribute to impacts on water quality. Management actions are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS to identify the extent of potential impact causing activities such mineral development that could occur in the WSA. These activities are the result of planning projections only and are not described in the detail that would be required in a plan of operations or for processing a permit. Mineral development is anticipated to continue should the WSA be designated wilderness as a result of determination of valid existing rights. Therefore, management of mineral resources would not significantly change and the potential impacts on water quality would remain. Additionally, various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal law, the issue of impacts on water quality is not considered in detail in the EIS. Additionally, there are no significant increases projected for grazing use levels or ORV use that would contribute to additional water quality impacts.

EXCELSIOR WSA (CA-010-088)

The issues selected for the Excelsior WSA to be analyzed in the EIS are as follows.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

The wilderness values of the Excelsior WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  Wilderness designation would preclude development of a potential low temperature 10-Mw geothermal resource in the WSA.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  The Excelsior WSA is considered to have no to a low potential for minerals other than a potential geothermal resource. Since no exploration or development is anticipated for minerals an issue dealing with the impacts of wilderness designation on mineral development is not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock use within the WSA would continue to be allotted at the current 408 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. The only proposed project is a water development intended to provide better distribution of livestock and will not increase use levels. This proposed project would be permitted under wilderness designation. Therefore, an issue dealing with the impacts of wilderness designation on livestock grazing is not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  Wilderness designation or nondesignation of the WSA would not result in significant changes in management of the WSA that would lead to potential water quality impacts. Use levels for both grazing (408 AUMs) and motorized recreational use (100 visitor days) are not anticipated to increase. Geothermal development would be limited to 40 acres of surface disturbance in the central portion of the WSA. The only perennial stream in the WSA is located in the southern portion away from the projected geothermal development. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation on water quality is not analyzed as an issue in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  The predicted cultural resource sensitivity is moderate to high particularly in the uplands and northern portions of the WSA. The only proposed activities, geothermal development and a livestock water project, are located in the central portion of the WSA. Additionally, motorized recreational use levels (100 visitor days) and grazing use

(408 AUMs) are not expected to increase. Wilderness designation or nondesignation is not anticipated to result in impacts on cultural resources and is not analyzed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Excelsior WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-090)

For the Granite Mountains WSA the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

The wilderness values of the Granite Mountains WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

Planned vegetation manipulations involving prescribed burns and chemical sprays to increase livestock forage production for an additional 569 AUMs would not be permitted under wilderness designation.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

Minerals exploration and development could be precluded in the WSA as a result of wilderness designation. Portions of the WSA have a moderate potential for metallic minerals with existing mining claims. However, there is a low probability that a determination of valid existing rights would be proven. Therefore, under wilderness designation the WSA would be closed to all forms of mineral appropriation.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation would preclude development of a potential 50-Mw geothermal resource in the WSA.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

The historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad and prehistoric sites within the WSA could be adversely impacted should the area not be designated wilderness.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Candidate Threatened and Endangered Species

  The extreme eastern portion of the WSA along the boundary contains a population of Eriogonum ampullaceum, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species. None of the projected surface-disturbing activities including the planned vegetative manipulations occur in this portion of the WSA. Increased livestock use in the WSA would occur primarily in the central to southeast portions. It is unlikely that any projected management actions would affect this species. Therefore, the issue is not included for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Deer Migration Corridors

  The southeast portion of the WSA contains two deer migration corridors. Mineral development and geothermal resource development that is projected should the WSA not be designated wilderness would occur in the western portion of the WSA and would not affect the availability of these migration corridors.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has expressed concern that activities occurring in the Granite Mountains WSA without wilderness designation could contribute to impacts on water quality. Management actions are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS to identify the extent of potential impact causing activities such as mineral development and geothermal development that could occur in the WSA. These activities are the result of planning projections only and are not described in the detail that would be required in a plan of operations or for processing a permit. It is not anticipated that any of these projected activities would occur adjacent to or in close proximity to perennial streams or water sources. Since various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal law, the issue of impacts on water quality is not considered in detail in the EIS. Additionally, there is no significant increase projected for motorized recreation use that would contribute to additional water quality impacts.

WALFORD SPRINGS WSA (CA-010-092)

The issues selected for the Walford Springs WSA to be analyzed in the EIS are as follows.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Walford Springs WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected

by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  Wilderness designation would preclude potential development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource in the WSA. The west half of the WSA is within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA and has pending lease applications.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  The Walford Springs WSA is considered to have no to a low potential for minerals other than a potential geothermal resource. Since no exploration or development is anticipated for minerals an issue dealing with the impacts of wilderness designation on mineral development is not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock use within the WSA would continue to be allotted at the current 516 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. The only proposed project is a water development intended to provide better distribution of livestock and will not increase use levels. This proposed project would be permitted under wilderness designation. Therefore, an issue dealing with the impacts of wilderness designation on livestock grazing is not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  The predicted cultural resource sensitivity is low to moderate. The only proposed activities, geothermal development and a livestock water project would not likely result in impacts to cultural resources. Additionally, motorized recreational use levels (550 visitor days) and grazing use (516 AUMs) are not expected to increase. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation or nondesignation on cultural resources is not analyzed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

  Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Walford Springs WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

Wilderness designation or nondesignation of the WSA would not result in significant changes in management of the WSA. Existing use levels for livestock grazing (516 AUMs) and motorized recreation use (550 visitor days) are expected to remain stable. Geothermal development could occur if the WSA were not designated wilderness. However, this would result in only 70 acres of surface disturbance in the western one-third of the WSA. The only surface water in the WSA is two streams located near the eastern boundary. Since it is unlikely that water quality would be affected with or without wilderness designation, it is not analyzed in detail in the EIS.

MORMON MEADOWS WSA (CA-010-094)

The following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS for the Mormon Meadows WSA.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

The wilderness values of the Mormon Meadows WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Under wilderness designation, geothermal resources within the Mormon Meadows WSA would not be permitted to be developed. The WSA has a high potential for geothermal resources in the southeast portion where lease applications are pending.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

The Mormon Meadows WSA predominantly has no or a low potential for mineral occurrence. However, there is a high potential for metallic mineral occurrence with a moderate potential for development in the extreme northern portion of the WSA. It is anticipated that a determination of valid existing rights would result in mining activity with or without wilderness designation. Since mining could continue under wilderness designation this is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS. However, impacts on wilderness values associated with mining will be addressed.

- Impacts on Sensitive Plant Species

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species Phacelia monoensis occurs on 60 acres in the northern portion of the WSA. Mineral development would occur in the general vicinity of the plant habitat with or without wilderness designation, however plant inventories and protective mitigation measures would be required prior to any development. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation or nondesignation on sensitive plant species is not an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at the current 526 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. The only proposed projects are three spring developments intended to improve livestock distribution which would be permissible under wilderness designation. Therefore, impacts on livestock grazing is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

The only potential impacts to water quality would result from mining activities in the extreme northern portion of the WSA where Clearwater Creek runs approximately one-quarter mile outside the WSA's boundary. Mining activity in this area would occur with or without wilderness designation since a determination of valid existing rights is anticipated. Geothermal development which could not occur under wilderness designation is projected for an area along the southeast boundary of the WSA. The 92 acres of resulting surface disturbance would occur along the lower slopes of the WSA and would not be in the vicinity of any perennial streams. Therefore, the impact on water quality whether the WSA is designated wilderness or not is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS. Additionally, various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures prior to implementation of development activities to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal laws.

- Impacts on Crucial Wildlife Habitat

The WSA contains several sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting areas as well as deer fawning habitat. These crucial habitat areas are located along the riparian habitat of Bridgeport Canyon and nearby Coyote Spring on the northeast boundary of the WSA. Surface-disturbing activities including proposed mining and geothermal development would not occur in this portion of the WSA. Additionally, motorized recreation use of the WSA is projected to remain stable at the current 350 visitor days. Therefore, impact on these crucial habitats is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS.

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA (CA-010-095)

For the Mt. Biedeman WSA the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Mt. Biedeman WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Recreational Facilities Development (Bodie State Historic Park)

  Proposed facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park including an interpretive center and residential facilities would not be permitted to be developed in the WSA under wilderness designation.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  Wilderness designation would preclude development of a potential 10-Mw geothermal resource in the WSA.

- Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

  Under wilderness designation any emergency realignment necessary for State Route 270 outside the existing right-of-way would be prohibited along 4¼ miles of the route that adjoins the WSA.

- Impacts on Sage Grouse Strutting Grounds and Nesting Habitat

  Mineral development and the resultant increased vehicular use of the road along the northern boundary of the WSA could impact sage grouse usage of existing strutting grounds and nesting habitat.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock grazing in the Mt. Biedeman WSA would continue to be allotted at the current 1,183 AUMs. Proposed projects include water developments and a 200-foot drift fence to improve sheep distribution. Since the proposed projects would be permissible under wilderness designation, impacts on livestock grazing is not an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

The WSA predominantly has a low potential for mineral occurrence except for areas of high potential for metallic minerals in the northeast and extreme western portion of the WSA. It is anticipated that a determination of valid existing rights would allow development of these minerals under wilderness designation. Since mining could continue under wilderness designation this is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS. However, impacts on wilderness values associated with mining will be addressed.

- Impacts on Sensitive Plant Species

A small population of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species Phacelia monoensis occurs in the extreme northwest corner of the WSA. Mineral development in the general vicinity of the plant habitat would occur with or without wilderness designation. However, plant inventories and protective mitigation measures would be required prior to any surface disturbance. Therefore, the impacts of wilderness designation on sensitive plant species is not an issue for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

Mineral development in the extreme northwestern corner of the WSA in the vicinity of Mormon Meadows and Clearwater Creek is the only activity that would likely have the potential to impact water quality. Other development activities including mining and geothermal resource development would not occur in close proximity to perennial streams or riparian areas. Since mining in the Mormon Meadows area could occur under wilderness designation or nondesignation, the impact of wilderness designation on water quality is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS. Additionally, various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures prior to implementation of development activities to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal laws.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

Cultural resource sensitivity is predicted to be very high in the upland areas and the southern portion of the WSA where the sites are associated with obsidian collection and pinyon procurement. Surface-disturbing activities including mining and geothermal development are not anticipated in these areas with predicted cultural sensitivity minimizing the potential for impacts. Therefore, the issue is not considered for analysis in the EIS.

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-099)

Issues selected for the Bodie Mountains WSA to be analyzed in the EIS are as follows.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Bodie Mountains WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  Under wilderness designation, a projected 10-Mw geothermal resource within the Bodie Mountains WSA would not be permitted to be developed. The WSA has a high potential for the occurrence and development of geothermal resources particularly in the Travertine Hot Springs area with lease applications pending.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  Development of geothermal resources that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness would likely result in impacts to cultural resource sites particularly in the upland areas and the western half of the WSA. Cultural sites within the WSA are predicted to be lithic procurement areas associated with obsidian and pinyon collection.

- Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

  Under wilderness designation emergency realignment necessary for State Route 270 outside the existing right-of-way would be prohibited along 4 3/4 miles of the route that adjoins the WSA along its southern boundary.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock grazing within the Bodie Mountains WSA would continue to be allotted at the current 2,270 AUMs. Proposed projects for livestock management include water developments and fencing that are permissible under wilderness designation. A proposed prescribed burn on 75 acres to jointly improve wildlife habitat and increase livestock forage by 30 AUMs would be prohibited under wilderness designation. However, this is not considered a major action necessary to maintain existing

use levels or to significantly increase forage production. Therefore, impact of wilderness designation on livestock grazing is not considered an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

A determination of valid existing rights would allow development of a high potential for mineral resources in the Cinnabar Canyon area of the WSA. However, no mineral development throughout the remainder of the WSA is projected, therefore wilderness designation would not preclude development of potential mineral resources. Impacts on mineral development is not considered an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

Mineral development in the Cinnabar Canyon area in the southern portion of the WSA is the only activity that would likely have the potential to impact water quality. Potential geothermal resource development would not occur in close proximity to perennial streams. Since mining in the Cinnabar Canyon area could occur under wilderness designation or nondesignation as a result of projected high probability of valid existing rights, the impact of wilderness designation on water quality is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS. Additionally, various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures prior to implementation of development activities to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal laws.

- Impacts on Sensitive Plant Species

There are two populations of Phacelia monoensis a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species along the southern boundary of the WSA. One of these populations would be unaffected by surface-disturbing activities projected for the WSA. The other population is on the periphery on a concentration of mining claims in the Cinnabar Canyon area. Since mining activity would occur in this area with or without wilderness designation the potential for impacts would be the same under either designation. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation or nondesignation on sensitive plant species is not considered as an issue for analysis. Prior to any surface-disturbing activities plant inventories and protective mitigation measures would be required to minimize the potential for impacts either to the species or its habitat.

- Impacts on Clark Canyon Fishery

Geothermal resource development and mining activities projected for the WSA are not likely to occur within the Clark Canyon watershed. Livestock use would remain at approximately the same level with only a potential 30 AUM increase to the existing 2,270 AUMs. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation on the Clark Canyon Fishery is not considered an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Crucial Sage Grouse Strutting Grounds and Nesting Areas

  Two sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting areas are located in the center of the WSA near Big Alkalai. All mineral and geothermal development activity would occur along the western and southern boundaries of the WSA approximately one mile or more from these critical sage grouse habitats. Additionally, motorized recreation use is not expected to increase beyond the existing 900 visitor days. Therefore, this is not considered an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

BODIE WSA (CA-010-100)

For the Bodie WSA, the following issues were selected for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Bodie WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness

- Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  The WSA has only a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources with development potential considered to be low. Geothermal lease applications are pending for the western quarter of the WSA. While development is unlikely it is anticipated that limited exploration activities would occur. Wilderness designation would preclude not only development activities but also exploration for geothermal resources within the WSA.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  The WSA has a very high sensitivity for cultural resources particularly sites related to a prehistoric obsidian collection and pinyon nut harvest. Geothermal resource development, mining activities and projects relating to livestock grazing could result in potential impacts to cultural resources.

- Impacts on Crucial Deer and Pronghorn Antelope Fawning Habitat

  The majority of the WSA is considered crucial fawning habitat for deer and pronghorn. Projected geothermal resource development and mining activity could impact the productivity of this fawning habitat.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing in the Bodie WSA would continue to be allotted at the current 2,823 AUMs. The proposed projects include spring developments, pipelines, and fencing as prescribed in the allotment management plan to improve cattle distribution and effectuate the rest rotation grazing management system. Since these projects would occur whether the WSA were designated wilderness or not, impacts on livestock grazing is not considered an issue for detailed analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

Mineral resource development in the WSA is focused on the Paramount Mine area where a high potential for metallic minerals exists. Due to this potential, current activities and industry interest, it is anticipated that a determination of valid existing rights would result in mineral development under wilderness designation or nondesignation. The remainder of the WSA has a low to moderate potential for minerals as well as potential for development. Additionally, mining claims outside the Paramount Mine area are considered to be speculative with little or no interest expressed for development.

- Impacts on Sensitive Plant Species and Habitats

The WSA contains Astragalus johannis-howellii a state-listed "rare" plant, and Phacelia monoensis a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species. These plants are located in the east-central portion of the WSA. Although mining claims do exist in the area, the claims are not active and are speculative in nature. No mineral development is projected. A peat bog occurs in the south-central portion of the WSA. Again, no surface disturbance is projected for this area. Motorized recreation use and livestock grazing would remain at existing levels with no increase anticipated. Therefore, an issue concerning these sensitive plant species and habitats is not addressed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Sage Grouse Strutting Grounds and Nesting Habitat

The eastern portion of the WSA contains sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting habitat in the Dry Lakes plateau area. No mineral development or geothermal exploration is projected for this portion of the EIS. Existing grazing use (2,823 AUMs) and motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) are expected to remain stable at the current levels throughout the WSA.

- Impacts on Water Quality

The impacts of wilderness designation or nondesignation and the level of change in surface-disturbing activities were assessed to determine the effects on water quality. The only activity that would be precluded would be geothermal exploration which is anticipated to result in only 16 acres of surface disturbance in the upland areas in the western quarter of the WSA. Geothermal exploration would not occur near any of the primary drainages which are located in the central and

southern portions of the WSA. Other activities including livestock use (2,823 AUMs) and motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) would remain stable at their existing levels. A determination of valid existing rights would allow projected mineral development to occur with or without wilderness designation. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation on water quality is not considered an issue for analysis in the EIS. Additionally, various water resources agencies including the EPA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, as well as the BLM would require an array of mitigation measures prior to implementation of development activities to assure proposed projects meet water quality standards required by State and Federal laws.

MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-102)

The following issues for the Masonic Mountains WSA were selected to be analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Masonic Mountains WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness

- Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

- Impacts on Mineral Development

  Minerals exploration and development could be precluded in the WSA as a result of wilderness designation. This includes a low to moderate potential for metallic minerals. Additionally, the western one-third of the WSA has a moderate potential for nonmetallics particularly sand and gravel.

- Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

  Wilderness designation would preclude development of a projected 10-Mw low temperature geothermal resource in the southwest portion of the WSA.

- Impacts on Potential Bridgeport Indian Colony Expansion

  Wilderness designation would preclude granting approximately 120 acres under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act to the Bridgeport Indian Colony for long-term community expansion needs and future residential and commercial use.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not

selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Crucial Deer Fawning Habitat

  Although mining claims cover half of the approximately 500 acres of deer fawning habitat that occurs in the eastern portion of the WSA, no activity is projected for this area due to the low mineral potential. The existing level of motorized recreation use (425 visitor days) is expected to remain stable. Therefore, no surface disturbance or increased use levels are expected within the fawning habitat area.

- Impacts on Cultural Resources

  There are no surface-disturbing activities projected for the upland and pinyon areas with predicted very high sensitivity. The remainder of the WSA has a low to moderate sensitivity. Therefore, the potential for impacts to significant cultural sites as a result of wilderness designation or nondesignation is minimal and not analyzed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  Livestock use would continue to be allotted at the current 1,252 AUMs with or without wilderness designation. One spring development and four reservoirs are proposed to improve livestock distribution. These proposed projects would occur whether the WSA is designated wilderness or not. Therefore, impacts on livestock grazing are not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  There are no surface-disturbing activities that are anticipated in the WSA that would likely impact water quality. Mineral development that could occur if the area were not designated wilderness is projected to be located in the extreme northeast corner of the WSA near Masonic Mountain. Geothermal exploration and development as well as sand and gravel extraction are anticipated for the southwest corner of the WSA. There are no perennial streams that are located in the portions of the WSA where development is projected. Bridgeport Reservoir, located approximately one-quarter mile west of the WSA is separated from the WSA by a highway. There are no perennial streams that empty into the reservoir that originate or cross through the area projected for geothermal exploration and development. There are no significant increases projected for livestock use (1,252 AUMs) or motorized recreation use (425 visitor days). Therefore, impacts on water quality are not analyzed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Sensitive Plant Species and Habitats

  The WSA contains a population of Eriogonum ampullaceum along the western boundary. While the potential for nonmetallic minerals, predominantly sand and gravel is moderate in the west third of the WSA, the habitat for this sensitive plant is over one-half mile south

of the area where development would likely occur if at all. Potential geothermal development is projected for an area over 1 mile south of the habitat.

The southeast portion of the WSA contains approximately 40 acres of potential habitat for Phacelia monoensis. There is no development for minerals or geothermal development anticipated for this portion of the WSA. Additionally, livestock grazing and motorized recreation use is projected to remain at current levels.

Both of these sensitive plant species are candidates for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service threatened and endangered species list. While no development is anticipated in the known or potential habitat areas, surface inventories would be required of any surface-disturbing activities within the WSA to identify any other potential habitats and establish mitigation measures if necessary to protect or minimize impacts. Therefore, impacts on sensitive plant species and habitats is not considered an issue for detailed analysis.

SLINKARD WSA (CA-010-105/NV-030-531)

For the Slinkard WSA, the following issues were selected for analysis in the EIS.

- Impacts on Wilderness Values

  The wilderness values of the Slinkard WSA could benefit from wilderness designation. These same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

- Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

  Wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicles used for recreational activities in the WSA.

Additional issues were assessed to determine their significance for analysis in the EIS. However, upon further consideration they were not selected for detailed analysis. A brief discussion of each issue and the reasons for dismissing it from analysis in the EIS follows.

- Impacts on Livestock Grazing

  The WSA will continue to be allotted at 526 AUMs for cattle and sheep grazing with or without wilderness designation. No projects are anticipated to support livestock grazing in the WSA. Therefore, impacts on livestock grazing are not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Mineral/Energy Development

  Mineral/energy potential in the WSA is generally considered to be low to nonexistent. While a moderate potential exists for uranium, development, potential is low with no interest anticipated. The 18

mining claims are for the most part inactive with only minimal yearly assessment work being accomplished. Therefore, impacts on mineral/energy development are not analyzed in detail in the EIS.

- Impacts on Water Quality

  No mineral or geothermal development or other surface-disturbing activities are projected for the Slinkard WSA. Existing livestock grazing use (526 AUMs) and motorized recreation use (70 visitor days) are not expected to increase. No impacts to water quality are anticipated, therefore the issue is not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Crucial Mule Deer Habitat

  The eastern side of the WSA is identified as crucial winter habitat and fawning area for the West Walker Deer Herd. Three major migration corridors cross through the WSA. There are no surface-disturbing or development activities projected for the WSA or increased motorized recreation use. Since no impacts on crucial mule deer habitat are projected the issue is not analyzed in the EIS.

- Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

  Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any threatened or endangered species within the Slinkard WSA. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

SELECTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

Development of the Proposed Action is guided by requirements of the Bureau's Planning Regulations, 43 CFR Part 1600. The BLM's Wilderness Study Policy (published February 3, 1982, in the Federal Register) supplements the planning regulations by providing specific factors to be considered during the planning sequence in developing suitability recommendations.

In this document, the No Action Alternative, as required by the National Environmental Protection Act, and the No Wilderness Alternative are equivalent. Both advocate continuation of management as outlined in existing MFPs and recommendation of the WSAs as nonsuitable for wilderness.

The All Wilderness Alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

Partial Wilderness Alternatives can make suitable or nonsuitable recommendations ranging between the All Wilderness and No Action Alternatives. A Partial Wilderness Alternative can recommend as suitable for wilderness designation something less than the entire acreage of one WSA.

The following Proposed Actions and Alternatives for each of the WSAs in the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas were selected for analysis in this EIS.

Introduction

SACATAR MEADOWS WSA (CA-010-027) 18,175 Acres

Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness): 11,447 acres suitable
6,728 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action designates 11,446 acres of the Sacatar Meadows WSA as wilderness. The area constitutes the majority of the WSA and is located along the Sierra Nevada crest on a north-south axis. The eastern boundary of the WSA along the crest adjoins the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) WSA 157 of which the majority has been preliminarily recommended suitable. The western boundary of the suitable area runs the length of the WSA and generally follows ridges and drainages. While the designated area retains the WSA's approximate 13-mile length, the width varies from one-quarter mile to 3 miles. The suitable area is recommended as a compliment to CDCA WSA 157 in order to include the crest of the Sierra Nevada in this area as wilderness. In combination, the two areas create a larger, more complete ecosystem with a wider range of diversity. Special features include two known populations of as well as potential habitat for Phacelia novenmillensis a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate plant species. Additionally, portions of a migration route for the Monache deer herd crosses through the northern area.

The 6,728 acres not recommended for wilderness are located in the west half of the WSA where irregular boundaries and the penetration of private residential development result in an area of lower wilderness values and projected management problems.

Three alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 18,175 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 18,175-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

No Wilderness/No Action: 0 acres suitable/18,175 acres nonsuitable

None of the 18,175 acres in the Sacatar Meadows WSA would be designated as wilderness. The area would be managed for multiple use as described in part in this document and in the BLM's South Sierra Foothills Management Framework Plan.

CERRO GORDO WSA (CA-010-055) 16,102 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
16,102 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA is to not designate any of the WSA wilderness. The area will be managed under the Bureau's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes minerals and recreational use of the area with provisions for interpretation of archaeological resources.

The recommendation was based on public input and, to a secondary extent, some existing resource conflicts. Substantial local comments received during the public review period of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) affected the recommendation for this WSA. The DEIS suitable recommendation for this WSA was a primary focus of the public hearing that was held in Bishop, California. Among the various public comments submitted, regarding the DEIS for this unit, Inyo County provided input opposing the suitable recommendation on several occasions. In addition, the Bakersfield District Advisory Council resolved to recommend a change in the DEIS recommendation to nonsuitable for wilderness designation. Secondarily, resource conflict concerns include small portions of the WSA which contain high metallic minerals potential and a major portion of the WSA with moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals. Numerous claims are located in small portions of the WSA. Geothermal potential is high in a corner of the unit. The unit contains outstanding wilderness values that would enhance the National Wilderness Preservation System's present diversity. However, if the present level of resource demand remains constant in the WSA, little physical change to these values is expected.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 16,102 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 16,102-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 14,222 acres suitable/1,880 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 14,222 acres of the WSA. The area constitutes the majority of the WSA and includes the area west and north of Cerro Gordo Road. The unit is bounded on the east by the ridge road to New York Butte. This boundary turns west and south below Burgess Flat where it follows the Swansea Road south to an unnamed canyon and eventually along an old primitive jeep trail. The area is characterized by eroded sedimentary peaks, ridges, and steep canyons with numerous ephemeral drainages.

Physical relief is the primary special feature within the suitable area. The numerous mountains, canyons, rims, and ridges are generally unaffected by the imprint of man. There are, however, a few primitive jeep trails and some surface disturbances associated with past mining activity. However, these imprints are substantially unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole.

Of particular interest are the outstanding views of the Sierra Nevada and the Panamint Range that are available from the area. Portions of the Saline Valley Salt Tram, a National Register Historic Site, are located in the suitable area. In addition, the Inyo salamander, a candidate species for the Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife List, is located in two unnamed spring areas. The steep-walled canyons and upland stands of pinyon pine enhance outstanding opportunities for solitude. Opportunities to view wildlife are good with deer, quail, chukar, and bighorn sheep inhabiting the unit.

The portion of the WSA not designated as wilderness is a small peripheral area in the Burgess Flat area as well as a larger block of public land in the southwest quarter of the WSA--north and east of the nearby Swansea community.

SOUTHERN INYO WSA (CA-010-056) 36,600 Acres

Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness): 27,420 acres suitable
9,180 nonsuitable

The Proposed Action designates 27,420 acres of the Southern Inyo WSA for wilderness. This area constitutes a majority of the WSA and comprises the west slope of the south-central Inyo Mountain range. Trending northwest, the suitable area is bounded by Swansea Road on the south and east; the rim of Burgess Flat and the Inyo crest lie along the east periphery. Along the crest boundary, the WSA abuts the California Desert Conservation Area WSA 122 which has been recommended as preliminarily suitable in the California Desert Plan of 1980. The north boundary adjoins the Paiute "Further Planning" roadless area, which is administered by the Inyo National Forest. This area has also been recommended for wilderness designation. The west boundary lies along the lower foothills, and in a few cases jogs to and around the middle slopes in order to exclude man-made imprints and areas of high mineral potential. The west boundary line runs along various contour features including canyon bottoms, bluff rims, and elevation points. The area in general is characterized by rocky sedimentary mountains dissected by numerous canyons and ephemeral drainages.

Physical relief is one primary special feature within the suitable area. The rugged and steep mountainous terrain reaches elevations exceeding 11,000 feet. Keynot Peak and Mt. Inyo are the two highest peaks in the WSA--each towers to slightly over an impressive 11,100 feet. The ominous, hulking canyons challenge hikers and horsemen alike. Scenic values are quite striking, and heightened during early morning and evening hours. The mountainous landform overlooks the Owens and Saline Valleys, providing scenic panoramas that also include nearby desert and alpine mountain ranges. Opportunities for primitive type recreation as well as nature appreciation are abundant throughout the area. Several hiking trails lace the area.

Additional special features which contribute to the area's high wilderness values include portions of the Saline Valley Salt Tram--a National Register Historic Site; stands of bristlecone pine; habitat for the Inyo salamander, desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, prairie falcons, quail, and habitat for cacti. Riparian zones such as Long John Canyon Spring, French Spring, and others enhance localized scenic qualities. Opportunities for solitude are excellent because of the diverse landform.

The majority of man's works have been eliminated as a result of the partial wilderness boundary selection. However, a few primitive vehicle routes and mining related surface disturbances are located in the unit. These features are insignificant in relation to the unit's size and topographic diversity. Manageability is enhanced by the rugged topography (which

precludes most opportunities for vehicle encroachment and outside influences), the area's remoteness, and the buffering effect of the adjoining California Desert Conservation Area Inyo Mountains WSA and the United States Forest Service Paiute roadless area--both have been preliminarily recommended suitable for wilderness. These recommendations together encompass a much larger, more diverse ecosystem.

With respect to conflicting resource values, numerous claims are located in the suitable area. However, metallic minerals range from no to low potential. Although uranium potential is moderate, the only known occurrence of this mineral is in the nonsuitable portion. Geothermal potential is low. Nonmetallic mineral potential is primarily low, with a relatively small area (approximately 1,000 acres) rated moderate. Although beryl potential is high at a location in the west center of the WSA, there are no known claims or related activities there. In any case, nonmetallic mineral development potential is considered low due to lack of access and market distance. In addition, nonmetallic minerals (i.e., limestone and dolomite) are abundant outside the suitable area; beryl is also available outside the WSA.

The portions of the WSA not designated as wilderness include the Burgess Flat area and the lower- to mid-level foothills along the Owens Valley floor. This area includes primitive vehicle routes, mining related surface disturbances, resource conflicts, and some manageability problems. Manageability problems include potential development of a 72-acre patented mining claim and the numerous unpatented mining claims in areas of moderate to high mineral potential (i.e., moderate to high probability for valid existing rights). Geothermal potential is moderate. In addition, the western boundary is not easily identifiable due to a lack of distinguishable natural or cultural features. Multiple use management would allow for mineral development and recreational motorized access.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 36,600 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 36,600-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

No Wilderness/No Action: 0 acres suitable/36,600 acres nonsuitable

None of the 36,600-acre Southern Inyo WSA would be designated wilderness. The area would be managed for multiple use as described in part in this document and in the Bureau's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan.

INDEPENDENCE CREEK WSA (CA-010-057) 6,250 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
6,250 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Independence Creek WSA is to not designate any of the 6,250 acres as wilderness. The WSA does not provide unique special ecologic, geologic, or other special scientific, educational or scenic values which would receive additional and substantial benefits from wilderness designation. The WSA lacks easily identifiable boundary features along the east boundary as well as a lack of natural barriers to prevent vehicle encroachment into the area. In addition, outside sights and sounds reduce opportunities for a primitive wilderness experience. The unit's general lack of unique characteristics and marginal wilderness values contribute to a low overall wilderness quality. The area will be managed under the BLM's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife management, motorized access, and watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 6,250 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 6,250-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA (CA-010-062) 7,260 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
7,260 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Crater Mountain WSA is to not designate any of the 7,260 acres as wilderness. The WSA contains resource conflicts which include the area's moderate geothermal potential, as well as numerous mining claims and mill sites. A primary manageability problem which contributed to the nonsuitable recommendation is the unit's rounded open landform and its lack of vegetative screening which preclude outstanding opportunities for primitive experiences, particularly solitude. In addition, the WSA does not provide unique special ecologic, geologic, or other special scientific, and educational values which would receive additional and substantial benefits from wilderness designation. Scenic values may be adversely affected if full-scale geothermal development occurs. The area will be managed under the BLM's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan and under the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan which emphasize livestock grazing, visual resource management, minerals development, motorized recreational access and watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 7,260 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 7,260-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 6,165 acres suitable/1,095 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 6,165 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness the central and southwest portions of the WSA. This respectively corresponds to the cinder cone and associated lava flow in addition to a small portion of the alluvial outwash located in the southwest corner of the WSA. Areas excluded from the suitable recommendation include the northern tip of the volcanic lava flow as well as a portion of the Fish Springs Hill area along the southeast edge of the WSA. This corresponds to Alternative III in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

SYMMES CREEK WSA (CA-010-064) 8,130 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
8,130 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Symmes Creek WSA is to not designate any of the 8,130 acres as wilderness. The WSA does not provide unique special ecologic, geologic or other special scientific, educational or scenic values which would receive additional and substantial benefits from wilderness designation. The WSA lacks easily identifiable boundary features along the unit's east edge and a lack of natural barriers to screen the influence of outside sights and sounds. This unit possesses marginal wilderness values that lack significant or unique special features, resulting in a low overall wilderness quality. The area will be managed under the BLM's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan and under the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan which emphasize livestock grazing, wildlife management, motorized access, watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles, and continued apiary site use.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 8,130 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 8,130-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA (CA-010-079) 20,246 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
20,246 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Chidago Canyon WSA is to not designate any of the 20,246 acres as wilderness. The WSA contains some resource conflicts as well as some manageability problems. Resource conflicts include moderate potential for metallic and nonmetallic minerals as well as geothermal resources. In addition, the western portion of the WSA is a designated corridor for construction of utility lines. Manageability problems primarily entail the unit's lack of natural barriers which makes the unit open to vehicle encroachment. The WSA does not provide unique special ecologic, geologic, or other special scientific and educational values which would receive additional and substantial benefits from wilderness designation. The area will be managed under the BLM's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, cultural resources research activity including excavation, motorized recreational activity, transmission line corridor utilization, minerals development, and watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 20,246 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 20,246-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 8,326 acres suitable/11,920 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 8,326 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness the south half of the WSA. This includes the portion of the WSA that is south of the primitive vehicle route that lies immediately north of Chidago Canyon. Where the vehicle route ends, the boundary jogs to the south and follows the north rim of Chidago Canyon in a westerly direction to the transmission line utility corridor. At the east edge of the corridor the suitable boundary traverses south, then east and north along the existing WSA boundary.

The area excluded from the suitable recommendation includes the portion of the WSA that is located north of the primitive vehicle route near Chidago Canyon. This alternative corresponds to Alternative III in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

FISH SLOUGH WSA (CA-010-080) 14,450 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
14,450 acres nonsuitable.

The Proposed Action for the Fish Slough WSA is to not designate any of the 14,450 acres as wilderness. Manageability problems and resource conflicts were the primary reasons for the nonsuitable recommendation. Resource conflicts include moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals, and powerline facilities construction in the designated utility line corridor which would present scenic impacts elsewhere. Manageability problems include a lack of natural barriers to prevent vehicle encroachment in an area that is surrounded by roads. The WSA does not provide unique special ecologic, geologic, or other special scientific and educational values which would receive increased and substantial benefits from wilderness designation. Localized scenic values may be adversely affected if full-scale minerals development occurs. The area will be managed under the BLM's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, minerals development, motorized recreational access, cultural resources research, and watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 14,450 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 14,450-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 14,240 acres suitable/210 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 14,240 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness the entire WSA that is located east of the transmission line corridor. The corridor lies one-quarter mile east of the existing transmission line boundary. The designated corridor area is recommended as nonsuitable. The corridor lies in a north/south direction along the WSA's west edge. This alternative corresponds to Alternative III in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA (CA-010-081) 11,840 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
11,840 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Volcanic Tableland WSA is to not designate any of the 11,840 acres as wilderness. The WSA contains some resource conflicts as well as some manageability problems. These include moderate potential for geothermal resources, high potential for nonmetallic minerals, powerline needs in the designated utility line corridor, and a lack of natural barriers to prevent motorized vehicle encroachment especially along the Casa Diablo Road and along the western boundary

road. The WSA does not provide unique special ecologic, geologic, or other special scientific and educational values which would receive additional and substantial benefits from wilderness designation. However, some localized scenic values may be adversely affected if full-scale minerals development occurs. The area will be managed under the BLM's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes minerals development, livestock grazing, motorized recreational access, and protection of watershed resources for the City of Los Angeles.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 11,840 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 11,840-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 10,920 acres suitable/920 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 10,920 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness the entire WSA east of the designated utility line corridor which lies in a north/south direction at the west edge of the WSA. The corridor lies one-quarter mile east of the existing transmission line boundary. The designated corridor area is recommended as nonsuitable. This alternative corresponds to Alternative III in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

CASA DIABLO WSA (CA-010-082) 9,167 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
9,167 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Casa Diablo WSA is to not designate any of the 9,167 acres as wilderness. Resource conflicts include moderate to high metallic mineral potential, moderate geothermal potential, moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals, and utilization needs of the designated powerline corridor. Some lack of natural barriers invites motorized vehicle encroachment, primarily along the east side of the WSA. In addition, mining-related surface disturbances exist in the Casa Diablo Mountain area. The WSA does not provide unique special ecologic, geologic, or other features of special scientific, educational or scenic value which would receive substantial benefits from wilderness designation. Localized scenic values would be impaired, however, if full-scale minerals development were to occur. The area will be managed under the BLM's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan and the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan which emphasize livestock grazing, motorized recreational access, wildlife management, protection of watershed resources for the City of Los Angeles, and fuelwood harvesting.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 9,167 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire Casa Diablo WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

EXCELSIOR WSA (CA-010-088) 9,100 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
9,100 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Excelsior WSA is to not designate any of the 9,100 acres as wilderness. Potential development of moderate geothermal resources and a lack of natural barriers which make the area susceptible to vehicle encroachment were primary reasons for this recommendation. A slight impact to solitude occurs from State Highway 167 along the WSA's north edge and along the transmission line boundary at the east edge of the unit. This unit possesses low overall wilderness quality as a result of its relative lack of significant features or characteristics unique to the region. Scenic values would, however, be impaired, if full-scale geothermal development were to occur. The area will be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, minerals development, motorized recreational access, minerals development, visual resource management, and watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 9,100 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 9,100-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-090) 54,941 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
54,941 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Granite Mountains WSA is to not designate any of the 54,941 acres as wilderness.

Resource conflicts which led to the nonsuitable determination include moderate to high geothermal resource potential (half of the WSA is in a Known Geothermal Resource Area), pending geothermal lease applications, areas of moderate metallic mineral potential, and the potential to increase livestock numbers through proposed vegetation manipulation projects and facility developments. Manageability issues include potential development of claims in areas of moderate mineral potential and the unit's overall irregular configuration which precludes effective management of the unit. This WSA possesses special features which would be adversely impaired if

full-scale geothermal or metallic minerals development occurs. The features include wildlife and sensitive plants. In addition, unauthorized collection of cultural resources would continue as a result of vehicle access opportunities. This area will be managed under the Benton-Owens Valley and the Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plans as well as the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan which emphasize grazing management, minerals management, visual resource management, motorized recreational access, and wildlife management.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 54,941 acres suitable/0 acres unsuitable

The entire 54,941-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 35,981 acres suitable/18,960 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 35,981 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness the east half of the WSA and a large portion of the WSA's northwest quarter. The area recommended as suitable is bounded by the Dobie Meadows and Deep Wells Road to the east; the road to Warm Springs to the north; and State Highway 120, primitive vehicle routes, and nonpublic land to the south. The west boundary of the suitable area begins in the south at a primitive vehicle route in Granite Basin and traverses north; it then jogs east on a jeep trail to exclude the northwest slopes of Granite Mountain which contain moderate mineral potential. The boundary returns west and runs north to nonpublic land boundaries at Water Tunnel. Proceeding north along the east slope of Cowtrack Mountain, the boundary alternates between primitive jeep trails and nonpublic land. North of Cowtrack Spring, the west boundary reverts to a jeep trail until it terminates at nonpublic land near Warm Springs.

The area excluded from the suitable recommendation includes the WSA's southwest quarter in addition to a small portion of the northwest quarter. The boundary features for this area include primitive vehicle routes, nonpublic land, and the Mono Lake Scenic Area. This alternative corresponds to Alternative III in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

WALFORD SPRINGS WSA (CA-010-092) 12,250 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
12,250 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Walford Springs WSA is to not designate any of the 12,250 acres as wilderness. The major resource conflict leading to the nonsuitable determination consists of moderate to high potential for geothermal resources. A portion of the WSA is in a Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) with pending geothermal lease applications. The Mono Basin scenic values would be adversely impaired if full-scale geothermal

development would occur. Additionally, solitude is locally limited by the outside influences of nearby State Highway 167. Overall, this unit possesses no features of significance or characteristics unique to the region or to the National Wilderness Preservation System as a whole with which to enhance its low overall wilderness quality. The area will be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, minerals development, motorized recreational access, visual resource management, and protection of watershed resources for the City of Los Angeles.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 12,250 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 12,250-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

MORMON MEADOWS WSA (CA-010-094) 7,280 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
7,280 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Mormon Meadows WSA is to not designate any of the 7,280 acres as wilderness. Resource conflicts which led to the nonsuitable determination include a small zone of high metallic mineral potential in the north portion of the WSA, high geothermal resource potential, and numerous mining claims along the WSA's north edge. Manageability considerations include a lack of easily identifiable boundary features along some portions of the unit. In addition, the location of nonpublic inholdings within the unit results in a portion of the unit being less than one-half mile in width. Full-scale minerals development would adversely affect some of the special features of the WSA. In general, the WSA lacks characteristics unique to the region or the National Wilderness Preservation System as a whole, thus resulting in a low overall wilderness quality. The area will be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, motorized recreational access, wildlife management, wetland habitat management, pinyon nut harvesting access, visual resource management, watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles, and fuelwood harvesting.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 7,280 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 7,280-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA (CA-010-095) 12,420 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
12,420 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Mt. Biedeman WSA is to not designate any of the 12,420 acres as wilderness. The area contains resource conflicts including some small areas of high metallic mineral potential with associated mining claims, an overall moderate to high geothermal resource potential, potential emergency realignment needs for the adjoining State Highway 270 and the Bodie State Historic Park proposed facility developments. Manageability concerns include a highly irregular, not easily recognizable southern boundary and lack of natural barriers to prevent motorized vehicle encroachment, especially snowmobiles. The area contains some special features which would be adversely affected by full-scale minerals development. In general, the WSA lacks characteristics unique to the region or the National Wilderness Preservation System as a whole, thus resulting in low overall wilderness qualities. The area will be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, cultural resource management, wildlife management, sensitive plant management, wetland habitat management, motorized recreational access, pinyon nut harvesting access, recreational facilities development in association with Bodie State Historic Park, and watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 12,420 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 12,420-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 9,300 acres suitable/3,120 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 9,300 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness a major portion of the WSA. The suitable area boundary includes State Route 270 to the north. The boundary traverses southeast from Highway 270 along the Murphy Springs drainage bottom where it intersects with Cottonwood Canyon Road. It follows Cottonwood Canyon south to the perimeter of the pinyon-juniper zone where the suitable boundary line veers west following the irregular edge of the pinyon-juniper stands and nonpublic land boundaries. The boundary intersects the Bridgeport Canyon Road and runs northwest to nonpublic land boundary and State Route 270. The area designated as nonsuitable includes the east slope of the Murphy Springs drainage and the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA. The Bodie Bowl lies in the WSA's northeast corner. In addition, the pinyon-juniper zone along the southern edge of the unit was excluded. This alternative corresponds to Alternative III of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-099) 23,360 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
23,360 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Bodie Mountains WSA is to not designate any of the 23,360 acres as wilderness. Resource conflicts in addition to manageability problems contributed to the nonsuitable determination. Resource conflicts include moderate to high metallic mineral potential in Cinnabar and Hot Springs Canyons, moderate nonmetallic mineral potential in Cinnabar Canyon, a high number of mining claims, moderate to high geothermal potential, pending geothermal lease applications, emergency realignment needs of adjoining State Highway 270, and vegetation treatments to increase livestock forage. Mineral exploration activity is currently occurring in the Cinnabar Canyon area. Manageability problems relate to the existence of approximately 2,120 acres of scattered nonpublic lands in the WSA as well as cherrystemmed road intrusions which are required for access by miners and livestock operators. Special features of the WSA would be threatened or adversely impaired by potential mineral development activities. The area would be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes sensitive plant management, visual resource management, livestock grazing, wildlife management, motorized recreational access, wetland habitat management, pinyon nut harvesting, fuelwood harvesting, cultural resource management, and watershed protection for the City of Los Angels.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 23,360 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 23,360-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 9,790 acres suitable/13,570 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 9,790 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness a substantial portion of the WSA comprising the southeast block of public lands in the WSA. The WSA is bounded by a fenceline to the north; a fenceline, primitive vehicle route and cherrystemmed road to the west; a fenceline, State Highway 270, and a telephone line right-of-way to the south; and a primitive vehicle route and a road to the east. The area designated as nonsuitable includes the western and northern portions of the WSA which include Hot Springs Canyon, Clark Canyon, and the pinyon juniper zone that rings the western and northern periphery of the suitable area. This corresponds to Alternative III of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

BODIE WSA (CA-010-100) 15,455 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
15,455 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Bodie WSA is to not designate any of the 15,455 acres as wilderness. Resource conflicts are the primary reason for the nonsuitable determination. The unit contains several hundred mining claims and areas of moderate to high metallic mineral potential. Mineral exploration activity is occurring in the Paramount Mine area and the Beauty Peak/Dry Lakes Plateau. Geothermal potential is moderate; geothermal lease applications are pending for portions of the WSA. Manageability problems include existing cherrystemmed intrusions which are used for access by miners and livestock operators, and the highly irregular configuration of the WSA. Minerals development activities would adversely impair special features of the WSA. The area will be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes wetland habitat management, livestock grazing, minerals development, visual resource management, wildlife management, sensitive plant management, motorized recreational access, and cultural resource management.

Two alternatives to the Proposed Action were selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 15,455 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 15,455-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

Partial Wilderness: 6,945 acres suitable/8,510 acres nonsuitable

This Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends wilderness designation for 6,945 acres of the WSA. This alternative includes as wilderness the southern half of the WSA. The suitable area is bounded to the north by nonpublic land, a Rough Creek tributary, and a primitive vehicle route. The east edge is bounded by nonpublic land, while the WSA's southern periphery is bounded by the Bodie and Geiger Grade Roads. The west boundary adjoins nonpublic land. The area designated as nonsuitable includes the north half of the WSA. The excluded area includes the Beauty Peak/Dry Lakes Plateau, the Rough Creek drainage and the Paramount Mine area. This alternative corresponds to Alternative III of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-010-102) 6,600 Acres

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
6,600 acres nonsuitable

The Proposed Action for the Masonic Mountains WSA is to not designate any of the 6,600 acres as wilderness. Resource conflicts and overall low wilderness quality led to the nonsuitable determination. The WSA contains low to moderate potential, moderate to high geothermal resource potential,

pending geothermal lease applications, proposed vegetation treatments to increase livestock forage, and Native American Tribal Colony expansion needs. Special features of the WSA would be impaired if full-scale mineral development occurs. The unit possesses no characteristics unique to the region with which to enhance its marginal wilderness quality. This area will be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes wildlife management, livestock grazing, wetland management, motorized recreational access, rural community expansion, pinyon nut harvesting, fuelwood harvesting, minerals development, and sensitive plant management.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 6,600 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 6,600-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

SLINKARD WSA (CA-010-105/NV-030-531)

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action): 0 acres suitable
6,760 acres nonsuitable.

The Proposed Action for the Slinkard WSA is to not designate any of the 6,760 acres as wilderness. Overriding manageability problems and some conflicting resource values contributed to the nonsuitable determination. The unit's long, narrow (only one to two miles wide) and irregular shape does not constitute effective wilderness management. Its ridgelike character renders it highly vulnerable to adjacent outside influences, as well as to potential encroachment of incompatible uses. Its narrow interface and protruding character do not enhance manageability of the adjacent Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Area. In addition, the existence of mining claims in areas of moderate uranium potential may limit future wilderness management effectiveness. This area will be managed under the BLM's Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan and the Walker Resource Management Plan which emphasize wildlife management, livestock grazing, scenic value management, motorized recreation access, and minerals management.

One alternative to the Proposed Action was selected for analysis in the FEIS.

All Wilderness: 6,760 acres suitable/0 acres nonsuitable

The entire 6,760-acre WSA would be designated wilderness. This alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be designated wilderness.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DROPPED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS

Sacatar Meadows WSA

In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement a Partial Wilderness Alternative was considered in addition to the Proposed Action which is Partial Wilderness as well as the All Wilderness and No Wilderness/No Action Alternatives. The management actions for the Partial Wilderness Alternative and the Proposed Action were essentially the same with the exception of one additional mile of primitive vehicle route to be closed under the Partial Wilderness Alternative. This closure would not result in any noticeable differences relating to wilderness values or motorized recreation use. The primary difference relates to the amount of acreage designated as wilderness. The Partial Wilderness Alternative recommends 15,060 acres as suitable with 3,115 acres as nonsuitable while the Proposed Action recommends 11,447 acres as suitable and 6,728 acres as nonsuitable. The additional 3,613 acres recommended as suitable under the Partial Wilderness Alternative do not significantly benefit the preservation of wilderness values and do not include any special features of the WSA. The Proposed Action together with the All Wilderness and No Wilderness/No Action Alternatives provides an adequate analysis of the planning and environmental concerns identified through the scoping process and review of the Draft EIS. The Partial Wilderness Alternative did not offer a significantly different range of choices or responses to the issues, and as such has been dropped from further consideration in the EIS.

Independence Creek WSA

No additional alternatives were considered for the Independence Creek WSA because of its small size, compact shape, a lack of easily identifiable boundaries along the WSA's east edge, and a lack of significant resource conflicts. In addition, the area lacks overall high wilderness qualities.

Symmes Creek WSA

No additional alternatives were considered for the Symmes Creek WSA because of its lack of significant resource conflicts and the absence of any boundary that would improve the quality of the wilderness values. In addition, the area lacks overall high wilderness qualities.

Chidago Canyon WSA

In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, an additional recommendation was made in Alternative III (partial wilderness) to consider the inclusion of a strip of Volcanic Tableland (5,280 acres) and the Fish Slough WSA (partial wilderness recommendation which totals approximately 14,240 acres) immediately to the south for wilderness designation. The combination of the Chidago Canyon and the Fish Slough WSAs in addition to the intervening land strip would create a larger, more diverse wilderness complex. This additional alternative was not evaluated because of motorized access needs for livestock operations, a lack of natural barriers to prevent vehicle encroachment, the existence of minerals resource conflicts, and an overall lack of high wilderness qualities.

Fish Slough WSA

In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, an additional recommendation was made in Alternative III (partial wilderness) to consider the inclusion of a strip of Volcanic Tableland (5,280 acres) and the Chidago Canyon WSA (partial wilderness recommendation which totals approximately 8,326 acres) immediately to the north for wilderness designation. The combination of the Fish Slough and the Chidago Canyon WSAs in addition to the intervening land strip would create a larger, more diverse wilderness complex. This additional alternative was not evaluated because of motorized access needs for livestock operations, a lack of natural barriers to prevent vehicle encroachment, the existence of minerals resource conflicts, and an overall lack of high wilderness qualities.

Casa Diablo WSA

No additional alternatives were considered for the Casa Diablo WSA because of the lack of high wilderness values and the absence of any boundary that would improve the quality of wilderness values.

Excelsior WSA

No additional alternatives were considered for the Excelsior WSA because of the absence of any boundary that would improve the quality of wilderness values, the lack of significant wilderness values, and the existence of geothermal potential throughout the WSA.

Walford Springs

No additional alternatives were considered for the Walford Springs WSA because of the existence of geothermal potential throughout the WSA, a lack of significant wilderness values, and the absence of any boundary that would improve the quality of wilderness values.

Mormon Meadows

No additional alternatives were considered for the Mormon Meadows WSA because of its small size, its narrow shape, and a lack of significant wilderness values.

Masonic Mountains

No additional alternatives were considered for the Masonic Mountains WSA because of its size and a lack of significant wilderness values.

Slinkard WSA

No additional alternatives were considered for the Slinkard WSA because of its size as well as its narrow, linear shape.

Al Leydecker, Mono County Supervisor, Alternative

An additional alternative considered but dropped from further analysis was an aggregate alternative that was suggested by Mr. Al Leydecker, a former Mono County Supervisor during the review process for the Draft EIS. This alternative would include combining the three Partial Wilderness Alternatives identified for the Chidago Canyon, Volcanic Tableland and Fish Slough WSA along with a 5,280-acre intervening strip of public land that separates the Chidago Canyon and Volcanic Tableland WSAs. This proposed alternative was considered but dropped from further analysis. The intervening strip of public land was reviewed as a potential wilderness addition, however it failed to meet the BLM's wilderness inventory criteria and contained grazing related boundary roads that are currently used by livestock operators. The WSAs that Mr. Leydecker proposed be combined are analyzed individually in the EIS including an All Wilderness Alternative for each.

Chapter 2

Proposed Actions and Alternatives

CHAPTER 2

THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Since the pattern of future actions within the WSAs cannot be predicted with certainty, we have made projections of management actions to allow the analysis of impacts under the Proposed Action and alternatives. These projections are the basis of the impacts identified in this EIS. They represent reasonably feasible patterns of activities which could occur under the Proposed Actions and alternatives analyzed.

SACATAR MEADOWS WSA
CA-010-027

PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS)

11,447 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,728 Acres Nonwilderness

The Proposed Action designates 11,447 acres of the WSA as wilderness. All vehicle ways would be closed and motorized recreation use would be eliminated from the designated wilderness. Vegetation manipulation for increased grazing use would not be permitted. Discretionary management action would be permitted only to preserve wilderness values.

The remaining 6,728 acres which essentially lie west of Deer Spring would be managed for multiple uses as outlined in the South Sierra Foothills RMP and in this document. The primary activities in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA would be grazing and wildlife habitat management.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The 11,447 acres designated wilderness in the Sacatar Meadows WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use. This includes 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes that would be closed to vehicular use, but would be utilized as hiking trails. No maintenance would be performed other than by volunteers and no new trails are planned. Closure of primitive vehicle routes would result in eliminating approximately 300 visitor days out of the current 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use estimated for the entire WSA. This portion of the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting and to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking and primitive camping. Nonmotorized recreation use would increase from 200 visitor days to approximately 300 visitor days.

In the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, recreational ORV use would continue over 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Use levels for motorized vehicle use would increase approximately 200 visitor days to an estimate of 400 visitor days within a planning projection of 10 to 15 years. No maintenance is projected for the existing 4 miles of primitive vehicle

routes. Nonmotorized use of the nonwilderness portion will remain at 100 visitor days. No recreation facilities currently exist in the WSA and none are planned.

Total use for the area would remain stable at approximately 800 visitor use days per year.

Wildlife Management Actions

Under the Proposed Action the entire WSA would continue to be managed with the California Department of Fish and Game as a part of the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area, to ensure that important wildlife habitat remains in Federal ownership. The habitat will continue to be monitored twice a year requiring vehicle use on existing primitive vehicle routes. Two spring developments would be constructed in the wilderness designated portion of the WSA. The springs would be developed to jointly benefit wildlife and livestock. The spring developments located in T. 23 S., R. 37 E., Section 7 and Section 8 are both accessible over existing primitive vehicle routes and would each require the use of a vehicle for two days for construction resulting in four vehicle trips. Surface disturbance at each location would amount to 25 square feet for a total of 50 square feet. Annual inspection and maintenance would require one vehicle trip for each project resulting in a total of two vehicle trips per year.

No other projects for wildlife management are planned for the WSA. There are no existing projects that would require inspection and maintenance.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The 11,447 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry and appropriation upon designation. The remaining 6,728 acres would remain available for exploration and development of mineral and energy resources. The entire WSA is considered to have a low potential for mineral occurrence except for a moderate potential for small deposits of uranium in the southern portion of the WSA. Development potential for uranium in the WSA is low to very low due to the rugged terrain, remote location, ore deposit characteristics, and access difficulties. Currently there are no mining claims located within the WSA. Additionally, geologic indications result in a zero potential for oil and gas and zero to low potential for geothermal resources. No exploration or development of mineral or energy resources is anticipated in the foreseeable future.

Grazing Management Actions

The entire WSA, both the designated portion and nondesignated portion would continue to be allotted for livestock grazing use. Total use would increase from the current 462 AUMs to 579 AUMs. In the designated portion, use would remain at the current 291 AUMs. A 300-acre prescribed burn to increase forage production by 50 AUMs at the north end of Scodie Meadow would not be implemented. In the nondesignated portion of the WSA, current livestock use of 171 AUMs would be increased to 288 AUMs as a result of a 700-acre prescribed burn to increase forage production by 117 AUMs. The

T 22 S

T 23 S

T 24 S

R 36 E

R 37 E

M.D.M.

SCALE 1:62,500

2 Miles

1 0 1

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Suitable

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

SACATAR MEADOWS WSA

CA-010-027

Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)

MAP 2

prescribed burn would occur along the WSA boundary on the north edge of Sacatar Meadow. The burn operation would occur over a two-day period and require use of a helicopter and four support vehicles including a fire truck, fuel truck and two pickup trucks. The support vehicles would primarily utilize Sacatar Trail along the WSA boundary. Cross-country vehicle travel would be limited to emergency or fire control situations. A temporary staging area would be located outside the WSA on BLM public lands.

Two spring developments would occur in the designated portion of the WSA. These spring developments would provide a joint benefit for livestock and wildlife. Construction and maintenance of these two projects are described under Wildlife Management Actions for the Proposed Action on page 2-2. These projects would result in a total of 50 square feet of surface disturbance. No other developments are projected for the WSA within the foreseeable future.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

18,175 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

The entire WSA would be designated as wilderness. All 18,175 acres would be managed for its wilderness values as well as continuing current levels of livestock grazing at 426 AUMs.

Recreation Use Management Action

The entire WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use including the closure of 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Current ORV use levels of 500 visitor days would be precluded from the WSA. The 14 miles of vehicle ways would be utilized as hiking trails. No maintenance would be performed other than by volunteers and no new trails are planned. Current nonmotorized use is anticipated to increase from the current 300 visitor days to approximately 400 visitor days throughout the WSA.

Wildlife Management Actions

The wildlife management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative include continued management of the WSA as part of the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area and the construction and maintenance of two spring developments as described under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire 18,175 acres within the WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry and appropriation as a result of wilderness designation. As described under the Proposed Action, the potentials for occurrence and development of mineral and energy resources do not indicate any exploration or development would be precluded.

Grazing Management Actions

The entire WSA would continue to be allotted for livestock use at the current level of 462 AUMs. Two prescribed burns (700 acres and 300 acres) planned to increase forage production within the WSA by 167 AUMs would be prohibited.

Two spring developments would occur. These spring developments would provide a joint benefit for livestock and wildlife. Construction and maintenance of these two projects are described under Wildlife Management Actions for the Proposed Action on page 2-2. These projects would result in a total of 50 square feet of surface disturbance.

Maintenance of the two spring developments in the WSA would continue to require a total of two days of vehicle use as described under the Proposed Action. No other livestock grazing projects are anticipated for the WSA within the foreseeable future.

NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
18,175 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 18,175 acres of public lands in the Sacatar Meadows WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. Under this alternative, the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing South Sierra Foothills MFP and land use plans developed specifically for this area. The primary activities would include range management for increased livestock use and wildlife habitat management projects to improve deer spring and winter range. Recreational ORV use would continue in the WSA over 14 miles of existing vehicle ways.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The WSA would remain open to motorized recreation use in accordance with the MFP which designates the area as limited to existing routes. Recreational ORV use is expected to remain stable at 500 visitor days per year. Nonmotorized use of the area is anticipated to increase slightly from the current 300 visitor days to approximately 350 visitor days. No recreational facilities currently exist in the WSA and none are planned. No maintenance is projected for the existing primitive vehicle routes. Total use of the area would increase slightly to 350 visitor days per year.

Wildlife Management Actions

The wildlife management actions for this alternative are the same as described under the Proposed Action which include continued management of the WSA as part of the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area and the construction and maintenance of two spring developments.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire 18,175 acres within the WSA would remain available for mineral and energy resource exploration and development. As described under the Proposed Action the potential for occurrence and development of mineral or energy resources does not indicate any exploration or development would occur.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing use within the WSA would increase from the current level of 462 AUMs to a total of 629 AUMs as a result of two prescribed burns to increase forage production. A 700-acre burn north of Sacatar Meadow along the WSA boundary would increase forage production by 117 AUMs as described under the Proposed Action. An additional prescribed burn involving 300 acres would occur at the north end of Scodie Meadow and increase forage production by 50 AUMs. This burn would occur on a single day and require the use of a helicopter and four support vehicles, including a fire truck, fuel truck, and two pickup trucks. The support vehicles would primarily utilize existing vehicle routes with cross-country travel limited to emergency or fire control situations. A temporary staging area for fueling and mixing would require surface brushing of one-quarter acre.

Two spring developments would be implemented to provide joint benefits to livestock and wildlife. Construction and maintenance of these two projects are described under Wildlife Management Actions for the Proposed Action on page 2-2.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE SACATAR MEADOWS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	There would be a slight benefit to wilderness values within the 11,447 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Elimination of 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use and prohibiting a 300-acre prescribed burn would help retain and maintain the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude. On the 6,728 acres not designated wilderness, solitude and naturalness would be impaired as a result of continued motorized vehicle use and a 700-acre prescribed burn. Overall there would be only a slight impact to wilderness values throughout the WSA.	Wilderness designation of the entire 18,175 acres within the Sacatar Meadows WSA would result in slight positive benefits to the wilderness values. Naturalness and solitude would be retained locally as a result of two prescribed burns totaling 1,000 acres. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use would result in a slight positive benefit to wilderness values, primarily solitude. Special features including sensitive plant habitat and deer migration corridors would be retained and slightly enhanced.	The overall impacts on wilderness values would be minor throughout the 18,175-acre WSA. Locally, the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be diminished within an area of approximately 2,200 acres as a result of prescribed burning. Continued low levels of existing uses and the lack of proposed activities would not significantly affect wilderness.
Motorized Recreation Use	Overall, there would be only a minor impact to motorized recreation use as a result of designating an 11,447-acre portion of the WSA as wilderness with 300 visitor days foregone. Opportunities outside the WSA and within the 6,728 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness would accommodate displaced users. Use within the nonwilderness portion would continue and is projected to increase by 200 visitor days.	Wilderness designation would close the entire 18,175 acres within the WSA to motorized recreation use eliminating 500 visitor days per year. This would result in a minor adverse impact as use would be displaced to other public lands outside the WSA.	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is projected to remain stable at 500 visitor days per year.
Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements	There would be only a minor impact to livestock grazing as a result of prohibiting a 300-acre prescribed burn in the wilderness portion of the WSA foregoing an increase of 50 AUMs. Overall livestock use would increase in the non-designated portion by 117 AUMs as a result of a 700-acre burn. No other proposed projects would be eliminated.	There would be a minor impact to livestock grazing. Precluding 1,000 acres of prescribed burns would forego the opportunity to increase forage production by 167 AUMs. Current livestock use would continue to be allotted at 462 AUMs.	There would be no impacts on livestock grazing and range improvements. All planned projects would be implemented, including two prescribed burns on a total of 1,000 acres resulting in an increase of 167 AUMs.

CERRO GORDO WSA
CA-010-055

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
16,102 Acres Nonwilderness

The Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA is not to designate any of the WSA as wilderness. The WSA will be managed under the BLM's existing Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan (MFP) which emphasizes scenic values, wildlife habitat, and motorized recreational access with provisions for interpretation of cultural resources. (See Map 3, p. 2-11)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational activities would continue on 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and trails within the entire 16,102 acres of the WSA. Visitor use is expected to increase slightly from the present 1,000 visitor days to 1,100 visitor days annually. Approximately 900 visitor days related to motorized vehicle access such as hunting, camping, and sightseeing would remain stable. Hiking and backpacking would increase from 100 visitor days to 200 visitor days per year. Recreation facilities such as campgrounds do not presently exist in the WSA and none are planned due to the area's low use and low demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

Reintroduction of bighorn sheep, a native species, has been recommended for the WSA. Release of the bighorn sheep would require the use of a helicopter for one day to transport sheep to the release site which would be located along the midslopes of the Inyo Mountains. Approximately 25-30 sheep would be released. Additionally, the Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes construction of one big game guzzler for deer, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife species. The guzzler would be located in the north half of section 17. The construction would occur over a three-day period with approximately three vehicle trips. The total surface disturbance for the guzzler would be less than one-quarter acre. Maintenance and inspection of the guzzler would require one vehicle trip per year.

A habitat management plan is prescribed for mule deer, bighorn sheep, chukar, and quail. The plan will also address the Inyo Mountain salamander, a candidate species for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) "Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species List." Currently, no specific management actions are proposed for the salamander.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry. The WSA is generally considered to have no potential to a low potential for metallic minerals. However, a small area in the western portion has been identified as having a high potential for metallics. There is a low to moderate probability

that a silver discovery would occur in the western portion of the WSA resulting in development of an underground mine. Approximately 100 acres of surface disturbance and 8 miles of roads would occur as a result of mining operations. The operation would include 30 acres for a millsite and other surface facilities such as portals, mine shafts, and airshafts, and a waste rock and tailings area totaling 70 acres.

Geothermal resource potential is predominantly low with a small area in the southwest portion of the WSA considered to have a high potential. It is anticipated that geothermal exploration would result in approximately 15 acres of surface disturbance resulting from eight shallow hole drill pads (one-half acre each) and two deep gradient hold drill pads (2 acres each) as well as 2½ miles of access roads. There is a moderate probability that exploration would lead to the development of a well head generator on 4 of the exploration well pads. There would be no additional disturbance other than approximately 1 mile of electric transmission line.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing is not authorized in the WSA.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Interpretive facilities are proposed along 3 miles of the Saline Valley Salt Tram that traverses portions of the WSA. A small interpretive sign is proposed along Swansea Road at the southwest boundary of the WSA where the Salt Tram first enters the WSA, and at the northern boundary along the ridge road to New York Butte. Post markers along the Salt Tram would correlate with an interpretive brochure that describes historical significance and key features.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

16,102 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 16,102 acres in the Cerro Gordo WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Fifteen miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. However, development of an underground silver mine with associated surface facilities would occur. (See Map 3, p. 2-11 for WSA boundary.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire WSA would be closed to motorized recreational use. The 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the 16,102 acres WSA would be closed. Closure of the 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes and the loss of motorized recreation opportunities would result in a decrease of 900 visitor days. Nonmotorized recreation use would increase slowly from the present 100 visitor days to 150 visitor days. Overall, recreation visitor use would be expected to decrease from the existing 1,000 visitor days to 250 visitor days annually.

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

B Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

CERRO GORDO WSA

CA-010-055

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 3

Under this alternative the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding. The 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes which would be closed would serve as hiking and equestrian trails. No regular maintenance of the trails would be performed. No recreational facilities exist within the WSA, and none are planned because of low use and low demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as those described for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA with the exception of approximately 100 acres projected to have valid existing rights, would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry The underground silver mine with 100 acres of surface disturbance and 8 miles of access road described under the Proposed Action would also be developed in this alternative since it is anticipated that a discovery would be made prior to wilderness designation and valid existing rights could be demonstrated. Exploration and development of geothermal resources within the WSA would be precluded under the All Wilderness Alternative. The mining claims in the remainder of the WSA would have a low probability of valid existing rights since the mineral potential is considered to be low at best, and no discovery has occurred and none is expected prior to designation. Consequently, these claims would be invalidated at the time of designation.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing is not authorized in the WSA.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

There would be no development of interpretive facilities in the WSA under the All Wilderness Alternative. An interpretive brochure would be developed to portray the historical significance and key features of the Saline Valley Salt Tram. However, post markers would not be used. Interpretive signs would be located on public lands outside the WSA along the ridge road to New York Butte at the northeast boundary and along Swansea Road at the southwest boundary of the WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

14,222 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
1,880 Acres Nonwilderness

This Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 14,222 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the Benton-Owens

Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes scenic values, wildlife, motorized recreational access, and cultural resources. Development of an underground silver mine and geothermal resources would occur in the non-designated portion of the WSA. (See Map 4, p. 2-15.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited on 14,222 acres of the WSA. Approximately 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 500 visitor days would be eliminated due to the closure and resulting loss of motorized recreation opportunities.

The designated portion of the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting for nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking and back-packing. This use is expected to slowly increase by 150 visitor days per year to a total of 200 visitor days.

The 1,880 acres not designated wilderness would remain open for motorized recreation. The existing 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes in this portion of the WSA would be available for use. Motorized recreation visitor use in the nondesignated portion of the WSA (400 visitor days) is expected to increase by approximately 200 visitor days to a total of 600 visitor days due to closure of the wilderness portion of the WSA to motorized recreational use. Nonmotorized use would remain at approximately 50 visitor days in this portion of the WSA.

Overall, use within the WSA would decrease from 1,000 visitor days per year to 850 visitor days. No recreational facilities exist within the WSA and none are planned due to low use and low demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

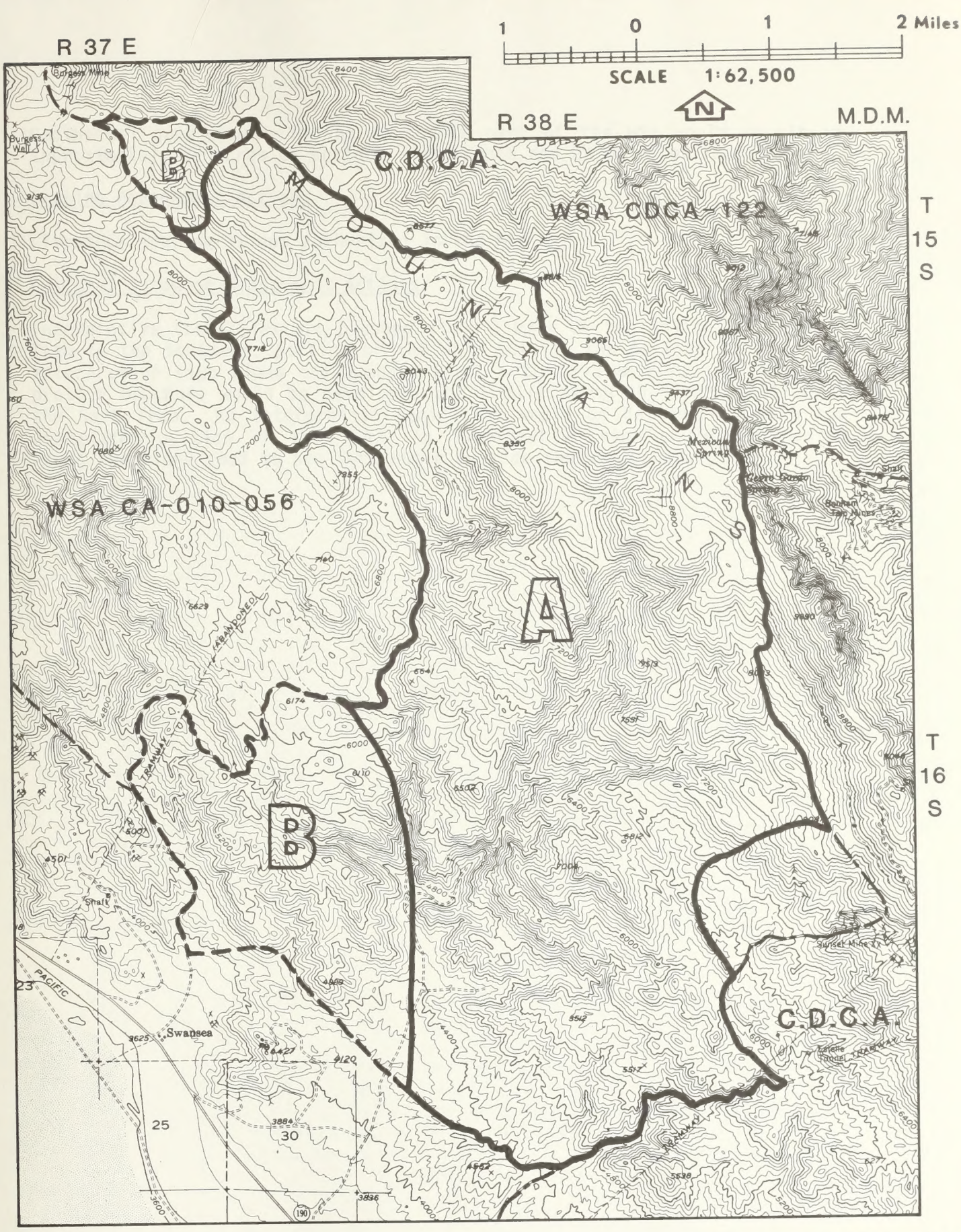
Wildlife management actions for the Partial Wilderness Alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action. The big game guzzler would be located in the designated portion of the WSA.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The 14,222 acres designated wilderness would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry. Approximately 30 mining claims are located within the southern portion of the designated area. These claims are in areas considered to have no mineral potential. The probability of valid existing rights applying to these claims is low. Therefore the claims in this portion of the WSA would become invalid upon designation.

The remaining 1,880 acres outside the designated portion of the WSA would remain open to mineral exploration and development. The underground silver mine with 100 acres of surface disturbance and 8 miles of roads described under the Proposed Action would be developed.

Although a small area of the WSA with high geothermal potential would be in the designated portion of the WSA, the remaining area with high geothermal potential would be developed as described in the Proposed Action.



CERRO GORDO WSA

CA-010-055

Partial Wilderness Alternative

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Area Recommended as Suitable

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

MAP 4

Geothermal development in the southwest part of the WSA would result in approximately 15 acres of surface disturbance and 2¼ miles of roads.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing is not authorized in the WSA.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Interpretive facilities are planned along 1 mile of the Saline Valley Salt Tram in the southwest portion of the WSA, outside the designated area. An interpretive sign along the Swansea Road, with post markers and an interpretive brochure would be developed for 1 mile along the lower portion of the Salt Tram. No interpretive facilities would be developed within the designated portion of the WSA. An interpretive sign would be located along the ridge road to New York Butte outside the WSA boundary.

TABLE 2
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CERRO GORDO WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	The wilderness values of the Cerro Gordo WSA would be subjected to a minor overall impact by not designating the WSA as wilderness. The primary adverse impacts would be highly localized and considered moderate. Mining activities and geothermal development would result in a loss of naturalness on 130 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired over an area of 2,200 acres. Primitive and unconfined recreation would be diminished within the mining and geothermal development areas and by continued motorized recreation use which would also result in negligible impacts to naturalness and solitude. Special features would be retained except for possible negligible impacts to the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram due to continued motorized recreation use and vehicular access.	The All Wilderness Alternative would result in positive benefits to wilderness values due to designation of the entire 16,102 acres. Naturalness and solitude would be significantly retained locally as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use and geothermal development. Additionally, should mining be precluded, naturalness and solitude would be retained within the projected mining area. However, if a mineral discovery occurs and the valid existing rights can be established (low to moderate probability) there would be a moderate localized impact on naturalness and solitude within the 1,200-acre viewshed surrounding the projected mine site. Special features and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be slightly enhanced.	Wilderness designation would have a slight positive benefit to wilderness values on 14,222 acres as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. Within the 1,880 acres not designated wilderness, mining activity and geothermal development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 130 acres. There would be a moderate impact on the perception of naturalness and solitude on 1,200 acres as a result of mining activities. Geothermal development would result in a minor impact on the perception of naturalness and solitude within 1,000 acres surrounding the development. Additionally, increased motorized recreation use within the nonwilderness portion would negligibly impact wilderness values including potential threats to portions of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram, a special feature of the WSA. Throughout the remainder of the WSA special features would be retained and slightly enhanced within the wilderness portion. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited on 130 acres within the nonwilderness portion. In the designated area, primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities would be slightly enhanced.

TABLE 2 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CERRO GORDO WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use. Projected use is anticipated to remain stable at the current 900 visitor days per year.	There would be only minor impacts to motorized recreation users who would still have access along the boundary road to Cerro Gordo. Wilderness designation would result in 900 visitor days per year foregone.	Wilderness designation would close approximately 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes within 14,222 acres of the WSA. All motorized recreation use within the wilderness portion of the WSA would be prohibited resulting in 500 visitor days of use foregone. The remaining 1,880 acres would remain open to motorized recreation use on 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes with use projected to increase from the current 400 visitor days to 600 visitor days per year. Overall, only a minor impact would be incurred due to access opportunities outside the WSA.
Mineral Development	There would be no impact on mineral development. Under the Proposed Action the entire 16,102-acre WSA would be open to mineral entry. However, only an underground silver mine is projected for the western portion of the WSA.	There would be a minor impact on mineral development as a result of wilderness designation. The potential for mineral resources is none to low with an area of high potential for metallic minerals. There is only a low to moderate probability of a silver discovery that would result in a determination of valid existing rights leading to development.	There would only be minor impacts on mineral development in the 14,222-acre wilderness portion of the WSA due to low mineral potential at best and the lack of identified mineral resources. Within the 1,880 acres not designated wilderness there would be no impact with development of an underground silver mine projected.
Geothermal Resource Development	There would be no impact on geothermal resource development. The entire 16,102 acres would be open for geothermal exploration and development. Only a small development is projected that would consist of four wellhead generators.	There would be less than a minor impact on geothermal resource development. Exploration and development of geothermal resources including a moderate probability of a small-scale production utilizing four wellhead generators would be foregone.	There would be no impact on geothermal resource development under the Partial Wilderness Alternative. Development of small-scale production is anticipated within the 1,880 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness. While exploration and development would be prohibited within the 14,222 acres designated wilderness, this portion of the WSA has a low

TABLE 2 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CERRO GORDO WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Geothermal Resource Development (Cont.)			potential for geothermal resources with a low development potential. Therefore, it is anticipated no resource production would be foregone.
Inyo Mountain Salamander	There would be only negligible impacts on the Inyo Mountain salamander, if any, as a result of potential future mining activities. There are no management actions projected that would impact either the populations or the habitat.	While there are no surface disturbances or other disruptive activities projected that would likely affect the Inyo Mountain salamander, wilderness designation would preclude any potential threats to the populations or habitats. Therefore, there would be a slight positive benefit.	Wilderness designation would provide a slight positive benefit to the Inyo Mountain salamander.

PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS)

27,420 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
9,180 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, 27,420 acres would be designated wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit proposed wildlife projects that benefit native species. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the guidance of the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes minerals development, motorized recreational use, and wildlife management. (See Map 5, p. 2-23.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

Approximately three-fourths of the WSA's 27,420 acres, would be closed to motorized recreational use. This would result in the closure of 5 miles of vehicle routes. Motorized recreation use on the designated portion of the WSA would decrease by 600 visitor days per year due to the closure of primitive vehicle routes and the loss of motorized recreation opportunities. Some visitors such as hunters, sightseers, etc., who had formerly used vehicles to enter the area would continue to use the area by primitive means such as foot travel. This would result in a continued use of 200 visitor days per year. Backpacking and hiking would slowly increase above its present level of 200 visitor days, but is not expected to exceed 400 visitor days per year. Closed vehicle routes would be used as hiking trails. Overall recreation use in the designated portion is projected to be 600 visitor days.

In the nondesignated portion, 10 miles of vehicle routes would remain open, thus sustaining the present 400 visitor days per year. A 200 visitor day increase in motorized recreation use is anticipated in the nondesignated portion of the WSA due to current users displaced from the wilderness portion of the WSA.

Overall annual recreation use under the Proposed Action would remain at the present 1,200 visitor days. However, there would be an increase of nonmotorized use to reflect the decrease in motorized recreation use.

Wildlife Management Actions

Reintroduction of bighorn sheep, a native species, is recommended. Sheep release would require the use of a helicopter for one day to transport sheep to the release site which would be located along the mudslopes of the Inyos. Approximately, 25-30 sheep would be released. In addition, the MFP prescribes construction of two big game guzzlers that would be located near Burgess Well and the French Spring area in the designated portion of the WSA for deer, bighorn sheep and other wildlife species. Total surface disturbance would be one-quarter acre. Both projects would require a total of 6 days construction and motor vehicle use along existing primitive vehicle routes. A habitat management plan is prescribed for

mule deer, bighorn sheep, chukar and quail. The plan will also address the Inyo Mountain salamander, a candidate species for the USFWS "Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species List." Currently, no specific management actions are proposed for the salamander.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

A portion of the WSA including 27,420 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry. There would be no future minerals exploration work.

The 9,180 acres not designated wilderness would remain open to mineral entry. Over the next 15-20 years, it is projected that silver would be discovered (low to moderate probability) resulting in an underground mine. The mine would be located in the southern portion of the WSA near Swansea Road. Approximately 8 miles of roads would be constructed. In addition, portals, mine shafts and air shafts would total 20 acres. The millsite to process the ore would total 10 acres while waste and tailings would total 70 acres. The mine would result in 100 acres of surface disturbance from the aforementioned activities.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing is not authorized in the WSA.

Vegetation Management Actions

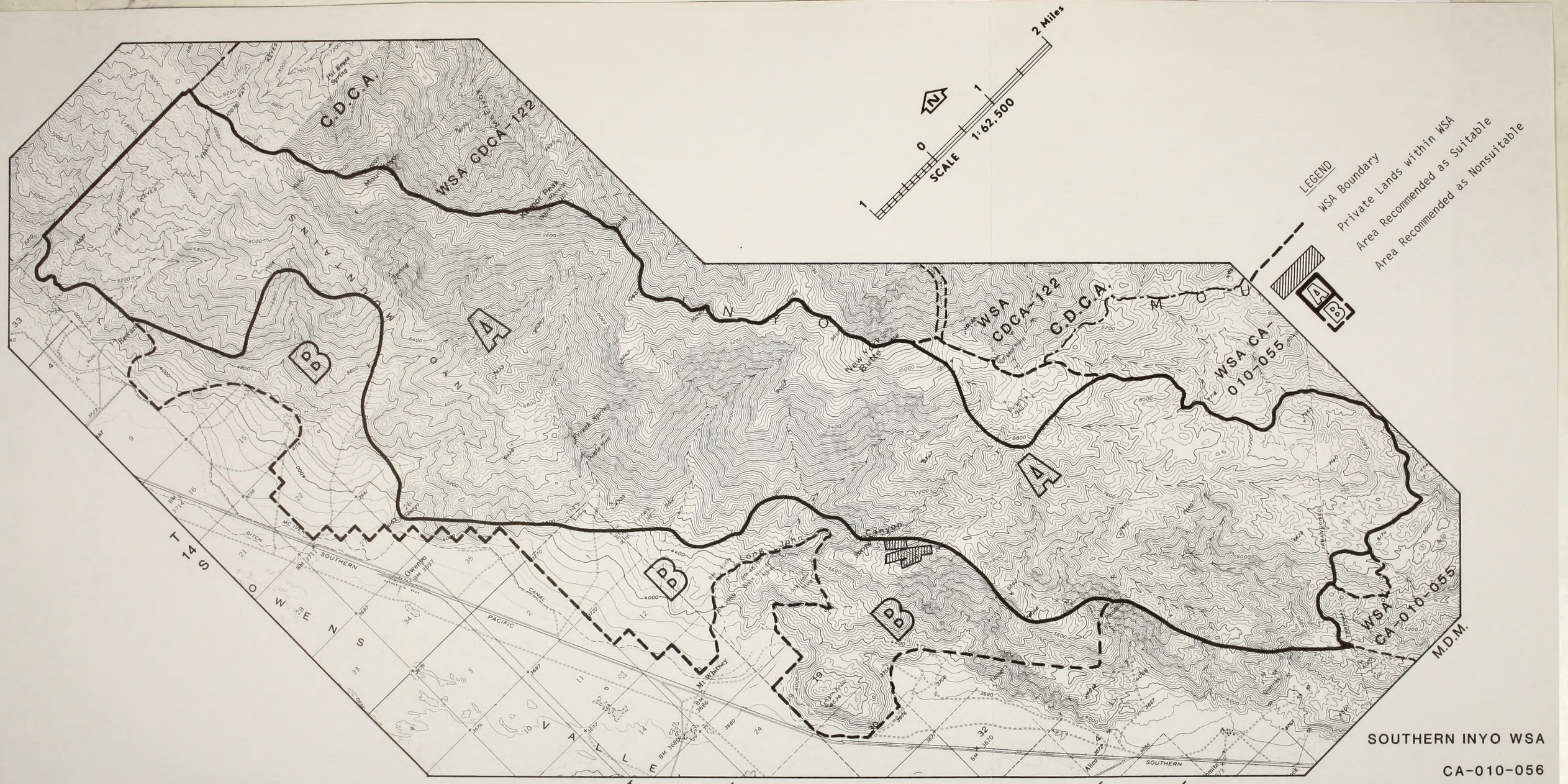
Public lands containing bristlecone pine have been prescribed in the MFP for evaluation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Bristlecone pine are located along the Inyo Crest and lie completely in the designated portion of the unit. The bristlecone pine stands have been identified as environmentally sensitive. An ACEC evaluation will identify what management policies and actions are required to manage this unique species.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Interpretive facility development would be prohibited along 3 miles of the Salt Tram and along 6 miles of the Pat Keyes Trail that are located in the designated portion of the WSA. Interpretive facilities would be developed along approximately one-half mile of the tram that lies within the designated portion. Interpretive facilities would probably consist of interpretive signs, and/or an interpretive brochure with post markers.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The nonsuitable portion of the WSA contains a 72-acre patented mining claim south of Long John Canyon. Vehicle access to the patented land would be allowed to continue on existing vehicle routes, four times each year, which lie outside the designated portion.



SOUTHERN INYO WSA

CA-010-056

Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)

MAP 5

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

36,600 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 36,600 acres in the Southern Inyo WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational use would be eliminated. New mining claims would be prohibited. Discretionary management actions would be permitted only to preserve wilderness values. Additionally, a 72-acre patented mining claim in the WSA would require motorized access as part of the landowner's valid existing rights. (See Map 5, p. 2-23 for WSA boundary.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire WSA would be closed to motorized recreational use. The 15 miles of rugged primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motorized vehicle use. Motorized recreation use would be expected to decrease by 1,000 visitor days due to the closure of the primitive vehicle routes and the loss of motorized recreation opportunities. Some visitors such as hunters, sightseers, etc. who had formerly used vehicles to enter the WSA would continue to use the area by primitive means such as foot travel since vehicle access would be allowed on the WSA's boundary roads. This would result in continued use of 200 visitor days per year. Backpacking and hiking would slowly increase from current levels of 200 visitor days per year, but is not expected to exceed 400 visitor days per year. Existing vehicle routes that would be closed to vehicles would be used as trails by hikers and backpackers. Overall, recreation use would decrease from the present 1,200 visitor days to 600 visitor days per year.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry. Most of the mining claims in the WSA would have a low probability of valid existing rights. Consequently, those claims would be invalidated at the time of designation. A small zone of high potential for metallic minerals which occurs near Swansea Road at the southwestern tip of the WSA would have moderate probability of valid existing rights. If determined to contain valid existing rights, the claims in this area would result in a producing underground mine. Approximately 8 miles of roads would be constructed. In addition, portals, mine shafts and air shafts would total 20 acres. The millsite to process the ore would total 10 acres while waste and tailings would total 70 acres. The mine's entire operation would result in an overall disturbance of 100 acres from the aforementioned activities. Should these claims not prove valid existing rights, they would become invalidated and any potential mining activity would be terminated.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing is not authorized in the WSA.

Vegetation Management Actions

Vegetation management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Cultural resource management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

A 72-acre patented mining claim located in the suitable area would require motorized access as a part of the landowner's valid existing rights. The landowner requires access approximately four times a year in order to mine his claim.

NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
36,600 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 36,600 acres in the Southern Inyo WSA would be designated as wilderness. The area would be managed under the guidance of the Bureau's Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan (MFP) which emphasizes minerals development, motorized recreational access, and wildlife management. (See Map 5, p. 2-23 for WSA boundary)

Recreation Use Management Actions

None of the WSA would be closed to motorized recreational use. Vehicle use would be limited to existing routes and trails below 6,000 feet, and limited to designated routes and trails above 6,000 feet. Primitive vehicle routes in the WSA total approximately 15 miles. Most of the routes are rugged and challenging. Visitor use is expected to increase from 1,200 visits annually to 1,300 visits annually over the long term. Approximately 1,000 visits are currently related to motorized vehicle access such as hunting, camping and sightseeing. This use would remain stable. Hiking and backpacking, however, would increase from 200 visits per year to 300 visits per year over the long term. Recreational facilities such as campgrounds are not anticipated due to the area's low use and low demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would remain open for mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Over the next 15-20 years, there is a moderate probability that a small zone of high metallic mineral occurrence near Swansea Road along the southwestern tip of the WSA would result in an underground mining operation. Approximately 8 miles of road construction and 100 acres of surface disturbance would occur as a result of mining operations. The operation would entail portals, mine shafts, and air shafts totaling 20 acres, a processing millsite totaling 10 acres, and a waste and tailings area totaling 70 acres.

Vegetation Management Actions

Vegetation management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Interpretive facilities could be constructed along all portions of the Saline Valley Salt Tram (3¼ miles) and the Pat Keyes Trail (6 miles). Interpretive facilities would consist of interpretive signs, and/or an interpretive brochure with post markers.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The 72-acre patented mining claim south of Long John Canyon would continue to be accessed by motorized vehicles along existing vehicle routes. The landowner would use the vehicle route on Long John Canyon approximately four times per year to access his patented land.

TABLE 3
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE SOUTHERN INYO WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Under the Proposed Action all wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced within the 27,420 acres designated wilderness by eliminating motorized recreation use. Negligible localized impacts would occur as a result of constructing two wildlife guzzlers with the perception of naturalness impaired on a total of 8 acres. Within the 9,180 acres not designated wilderness motorized recreation use would result in negligible impacts to naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation. Projected mineral development would result in a loss of naturalness on 115 acres with solitude and the perception of naturalness impaired on 500 acres in the southern portion of the WSA. Overall the impacts to wilderness values under the Proposed Action would be negligible.	All wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced under the All Wilderness Alternative due to the elimination of 100 visitor days of motorized recreation use on 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Should mineral development occur there would be a direct loss of naturalness on 115 acres. Additionally, the perception of naturalness and solitude would be lost within a 500-acre viewshed. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation as well as special features would be retained and slightly enhanced within the WSA.	The wilderness values within the WSA would be subjected to a minor overall impact by not designating the area wilderness. However, the primary impacts would be highly localized. Mineral development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 100 acres and the perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired over an area of 500 acres. Continued motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) would locally result in negligible impacts to naturalness and solitude. Primitive and unconfined recreation would be diminished within the 115 acres projected for mining and within the vicinity of the 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes used for motorized recreation. Special features would not be significantly impacted however the primary threat would result from mining activity in the vicinity of the Saline Valley Salt Tram.
Motorized Recreation Use	Overall there would be a minor impact to motorized recreation. The effects of closure of 27,420 acres of the WSA including 5 miles of primitive vehicle routes eliminating 600 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use would be partially offset by an increase of 200 visitor days within the 9,180-acre nonwilderness portion of the WSA. There would be a net loss of 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use per year under the Proposed Action.	As a result of designating the entire WSA as wilderness, 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. Since access opportunities to the Inyo Mountains are limited, this would result in a moderate impact.	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use. The entire WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use with the current 1,000 visitor days of use projected to remain stable.

Alternatives

TABLE 3 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE SOUTHERN INYO WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Mineral Development	There would be no impact on mineral resources. While exploration and development would be foregone within the 27,420 acres designated wilderness, this area generally has no potential to a low potential for development of mineral resources. Potential development of a silver mine could occur within an area of high mineral potential within the 9,180 acres not designated wilderness.	Overall there would only be a minor impact on development of mineral resources as a result of wilderness designation. Should a discovery of silver occur within the area of high metallic mineral potential in the southwest portion of the WSA, determination of valid existing rights would allow development under wilderness designation. Development of the potential silver deposit would be foregone if a discovery does not occur prior to designation. Other potential mineral resources would also be foregone as exploration and development activities would be prohibited.	The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry, therefore, there would be no impact on mineral development. Development of a potential underground mine for silver is the only mining activity projected for the WSA.
Inyo Mountain Salamander	There would be a slight positive benefit for the Inyo Mountain salamander. Habitat for both known populations would be within the portion of the WSA designated wilderness.	There would be a slight positive benefit for the Inyo Mountain salamander as a result of the entire WSA being designated wilderness.	There would be only negligible impacts to the Inyo Mountain salamander as the result of potential or unforeseen activities within the WSA. There are no management actions projected that would impact either the populations or the habitat.

INDEPENDENCE CREEK WSA
(CA-010-057)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,250 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 6,250 acres of public land in the Independence Creek WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, watershed protection, recreational motorized access, wildlife, and aquatic habitat. Livestock use allocation would be increased by 100 AUMs and established at 623 AUMs. (See Map 6, p. 2-31.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational use would continue on existing routes and trails. Visitor use is expected to remain stable at the current 500 visitor days a year. Virtually all visits are related to vehicle use and include fishing, hunting, and sightseeing. Use is considered low and dispersed. Approximately 2 miles of primitive vehicle routes exist in the WSA. No other development of ways, roads, or facilities is anticipated due to low use. Demand for future use is considered low. Brush thinning would occur along George Creek to improve fisherman access to the creek. Additional recreational facilities, such as campgrounds, are not anticipated because of the area's low use and demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

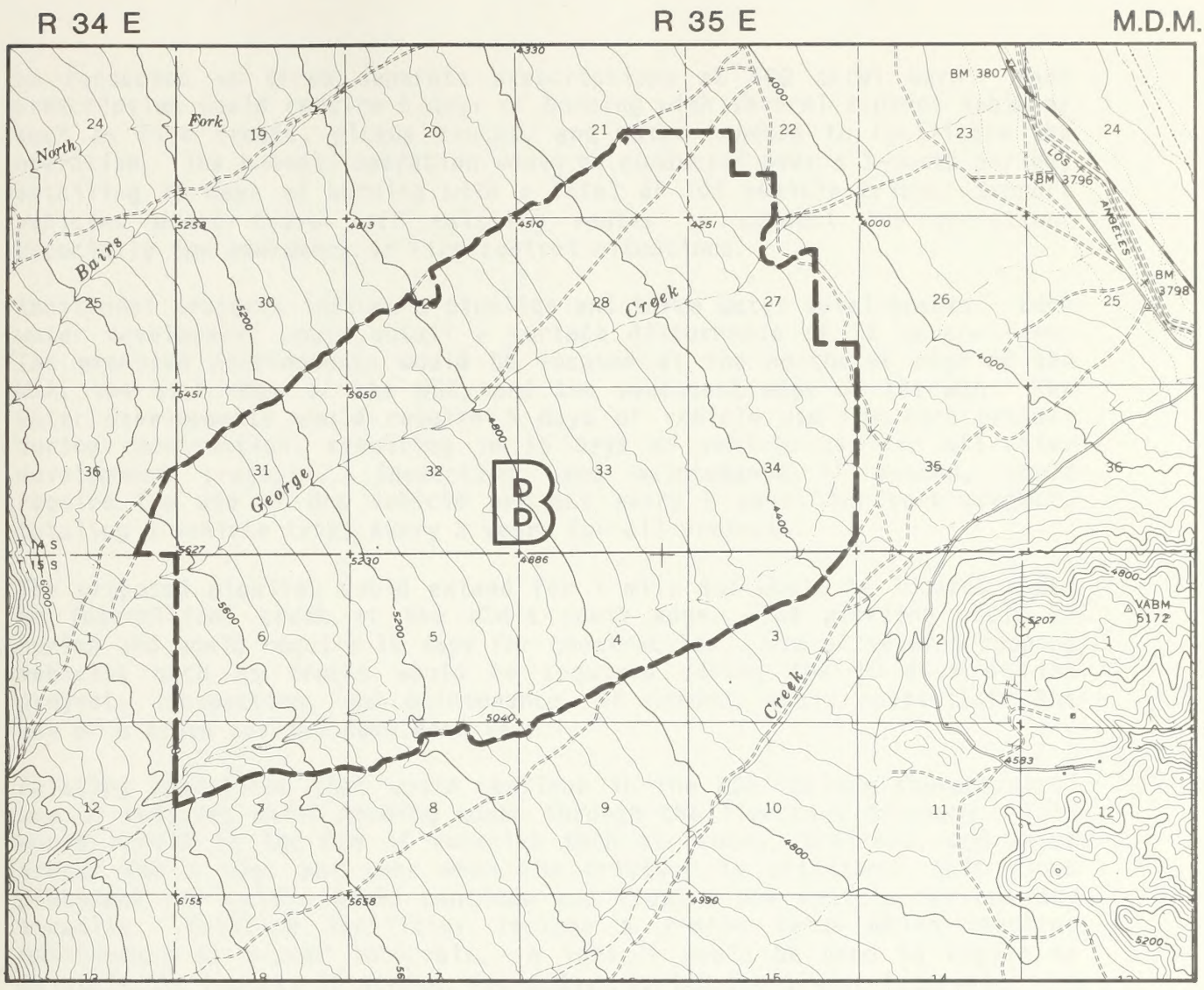
A cooperative management plan would be developed for the Goodale mule deer herd to maintain existing deer populations and the availability of habitat.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would remain open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Although there is a moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals such as sand and gravel, development potential is considered low due to the unknown quality of this material and the ample availability of this material outside the WSA. All other mineral potentials are low. Development is not anticipated due to lack of interest and low potential. Two mining claims in the northwest portion of the WSA are inactive. It is anticipated that these claims would not be developed.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 523 AUMs for sheep and cattle throughout the WSA. The 4-mile livestock driveway along the east side of the WSA would continue to be used by sheep. Proposed projects include a prescribed burn of 1,800 acres to improve forage by 100 AUMs. The burn would take place in the east portion of the WSA. The burn would



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LEGEND

WSA Boundary

B Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

INDEPENDENCE CREEK WSA

CA-010-057

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 6

be conducted as three separate prescriptions at 600 acres each. Each prescription would require 5 days of burning with several support vehicles such as fire trucks, pickup trucks, and water tenders to facilitate the operation. The overall operation would be conducted over a 3-month period, entailing 15 days of burning with a total of 105 vehicle trips. Support vehicles would travel off existing routes to conduct the operation, especially for emergency or fire control situations.

Additional projects include a pipeline and three water developments. Each water development would entail a surface disturbance of 25 square feet. The proposed developments would be located at the northeast edge of the WSA, the west edge of the WSA, and the southeast edge of the WSA. The water developments would require 5 days of vehicle use for each project during construction, resulting in 15 days of vehicle use for all water development projects. Inspection, and maintenance if needed, would require the use of one vehicle per day every 3 years for each project, totaling 3 vehicle trips every 3 years for all projects.

The proposed pipeline would extend for 1 mile and would be located along an intermittent creek at the WSA's south edge. The pipeline would be buried and would require 10 days for construction. Use of several support vehicles such as trucks would be required during the 10 days of the project. Inspection, and maintenance, if needed, would necessitate the use of a truck for two days each year.

Existing operations that would continue in the WSA include sheepherders' use of vehicles while herding sheep through the livestock driveway. This would result in the use of vehicles such as trucks, trailers, and water trucks for 5 days per year when the driveway is utilized. Salt block placement for cattle would continue and require one vehicle for one day annually. Existing facilities include a 2-mile fence which requires maintenance at 5-year intervals. A vehicle would be used to repair or maintain the fences, if needed, for 4 days during the 5-year interval.

Watershed Management Actions

An aquatic management plan is prescribed to maintain the existing habitat and water quality of George Creek. However at this time no watershed projects have been identified.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The unused transmission line right-of-way that was authorized in the WSA would be relinquished. The right-of-way transmission line facility was constructed outside the WSA and the right-of-way is no longer needed in the WSA.

A right-of-way authorization would be granted to the City of Los Angeles to maintain existing water spreading and diversion channels. These facilities are located in the east quarter of the WSA and occupy a linear distance of 5 miles. Maintenance requirements include the use of heavy equipment such as backhoes, bulldozers, and road graders as well as support trucks. Maintenance is required 2 weeks every 3 years.

No additional facilities are proposed for this WSA.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,250 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 6,250 acres in the Independence Creek WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational use would be eliminated. Two miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Discretionary management actions which would maintain existing water spreading and diversion channels would be permitted in the public interest to prevent flooding. Other discretionary management actions would be permitted only to protect wilderness values. Grazing use would continue to be allocated at 523 animal unit months. (See Map 6, p. 2-31 for WSA boundary.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

The WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 500 visitor days that are estimated to occur in the area annually. Two miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Under this alternative, the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking fishing, and primitive camping. Projections indicate that a slight increase in primitive recreation use would occur as a result of wilderness designation. These uses are currently nonexistent, but are expected to increase to 20 visitor days annually. No recreational facilities exist and none are planned because of low use the area receives. Brush thinning along George Creek as prescribed in the MFP to improve angler access would be prohibited.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, 6,250 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. It is not anticipated that active mineral development would occur in the designated wilderness because of the area's marginal mineral potential, relative lack of mining claims, and mineral availability outside the WSA. All mining claims would be invalidated.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action except for the prescribed burn which would be prohibited. In addition, maintenance operations for existing grazing activities and facilities would vary slightly from the Proposed Action. Salt block placement would be conducted on horseback rather than by truck. Maintenance of the existing fence would require use

of a truck for 1 day every 5 years to transport materials to the project site. Actual fence maintenance and repair would be done by personnel who ride horses to the site. Finally, the use of trucks, trailers, and water trucks to herd sheep along the livestock driveway would be conducted outside the unit without impairing herding operations.

Watershed Management Actions

Watershed management actions for this alternative are the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

Land tenure adjustment actions under this alternative would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

TABLE 4
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE INDEPENDENCE CREEK WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	There would be only very minor and short-term impacts on the wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in portions of the WSA. A proposed prescribed burn would have a short-term impact on naturalness (1,800 acres) and solitude (3-month period) values. Twenty-five additional cattle would use the denuded area after vegetation had become reestablished, thus slightly affecting naturalness. Maintenance of existing and proposed range facilities as well as existing water-spreading and diversion channels would slightly affect solitude in local areas for short periods of time and impair the perception of naturalness on less than 100 acres.	The net effect of the management actions would be a slight enhancement of long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of area to motor vehicle use, prohibitions of the proposed prescribed burn, and a decrease in vehicle use associated with maintenance of existing range improvements and existing livestock driveway use would provide some, albeit low, benefits to the area's wilderness values. In addition, long-term security from unanticipated adverse future actions such as mineral exploration and development would be provided.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which is expected to remain at the current 500 visitor days per year.	Motorized recreation use totaling 500 visitor days would be foregone. This would result in only a minor impact as opportunities for motorized recreation use are available on other public lands outside the WSA, and the boundary roads would provide access to those recreation users that wish to continue using the area without vehicles.
Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements	There would be no impact to livestock grazing and range improvements. All existing operations and proposed projects would be permitted, including a 1,800-acre prescribed burn to increase forage production by 100 AUMs to a total of 653 AUMs.	Prohibiting a proposed 1,800-acre prescribed burn would result in foregoing an opportunity to increase livestock forage by 100 AUMs. Current livestock operations are not dependent upon this increase therefore there would only be a minor impact.

Alternatives

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA
(CA-010-062)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
7,260 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 7,260 acres of public lands in the Crater Mountain WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal the lands would be managed in accordance with the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan and the Inyo National Forest Plan which emphasize livestock grazing, scenic values, wildlife, cultural resources, and motorized recreational access. Livestock use would continue at 293 animal unit months. (See Map 7, p. 2-39.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational use would continue on existing routes and trails. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes exist in the WSA. Overall, visitor use is expected to remain stable at 900 visitor days annually. Recreation use is dispersed, and primarily related to vehicle access which accounts for 675 visitor days. Use would continue around activities such as hunting, geological sightseeing, appreciation of cultural resources, etc. No development of recreation facilities or additional vehicle routes is anticipated because of the area's low use and low demand. Demand for future use is considered low.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Although there is moderate geothermal potential in the WSA, development potential is considered low due to a lack of a readily identifiable geothermal resource and lack of interest by industry. All other minerals have low potential and low development potential except for a small area of moderate metallic mineral potential on the southern portion of the WSA. Fifty-nine mining claims would remain open to exploration and development. Fifty-three of these claims are millsite claims which are located in the southern portion of the unit. Development potential for metallics in this area is moderate. If mineral development would occur, it is projected that there would be a discovery of gold in the southern portion of the WSA near Fish Springs Hill. An estimated 90 acres of surface disturbance would be associated with developing this underground mine, including 3 miles for exploration and development roads, portals, waste and tailings areas, and a millsite.

Development of other mineral resources is not anticipated due to low potential.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 293 AUMs for sheep and cattle in the WSA. The 3-mile livestock driveway along the WSA's east side would continue to be available for sheep. No grazing projects are proposed for the unit due to current and full implementation of the grazing system.

Existing grazing operations require sheepherders to use their trucks, trailers and water trucks on existing primitive vehicle routes to herd sheep along the livestock driveway. This practice would continue under this alternative approximately 5 days each year. The half-mile drift fence requires inspection and periodic maintenance, including vehicle use, 2 days every 5 years. The three half-mile pipelines require inspection and periodic maintenance, including a total of six vehicle trips each year. In addition, livestock operators would use motor vehicles to place salt blocks for cattle 1 day each year.

Wildlife Management Actions

A cooperative management plan to maintain existing deer herd populations and the availability of habitat would be developed jointly with the Inyo National Forest.

In addition, a chukar water facility is proposed in the Fish Springs Hill area. The project would disturb a total surface area of 100 square feet. The water holding reservoir would be buried. Motor vehicles would be used during the 2-day construction period. Inspection and periodic maintenance, would require one vehicle trip each year. No additional wildlife facilities are proposed.

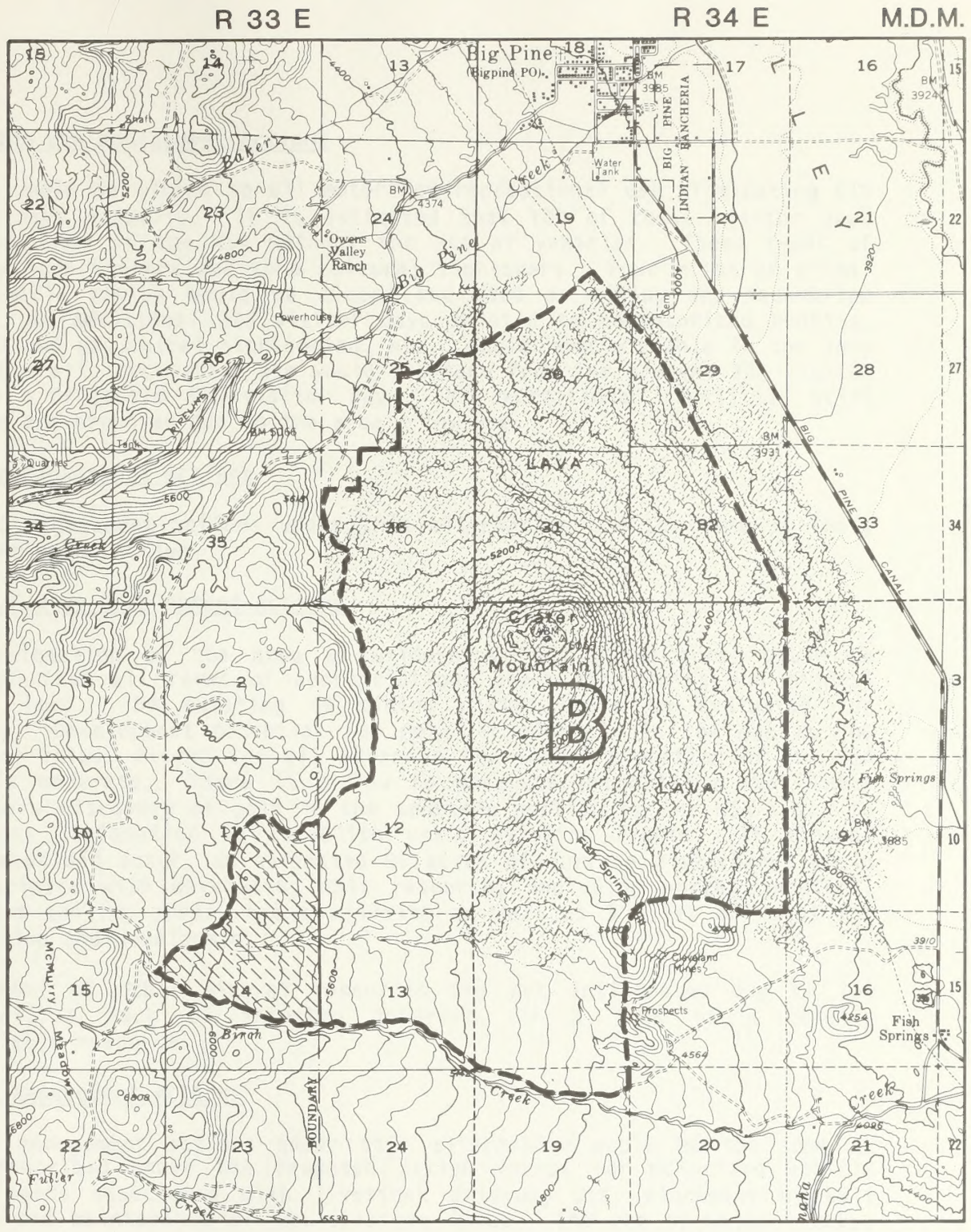
Cultural Resource Management Actions

An intensive inventory of cultural resources has been proposed for the WSA. While the study process has not yet been identified it could include excavations. If excavation pits were required for the study, they would be filled and rehabilitated.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

7,260 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 7,260 acres in the Crater Mountain WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational use would be prohibited. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used on hiking trails and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Livestock grazing and maintenance of related facilities, would continue as an authorized nonconforming land use. Grazing use would continue to be allotted at 293 animal unit months. Discretionary management actions would be permitted only to preserve wilderness values. (See Map 7, p. 2-39 for WSA boundary.)



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA

CA-010-062

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 7

Recreation Use Management Actions

The WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 675 visitor days annually. It is estimated that 100 of these visitor days would continue in the WSA without the use of vehicles. These types of users include hunters and some cultural sightseers. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. An additional 225 visitor days related to nonmotorized hunting, cultural and geological sightseeing, etc., would remain stable in the long term. Overall, recreation use would decrease from the present 900 visitor days to a projected 325 visitor days. No recreational facilities exist and none are proposed due to the area's low use.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions under this alternative are the same as those in the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, all 7,260 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. The existing 59 mining claims would be evaluated for validity. Development potential for metallic minerals is low due to low potential value, except for all areas in the southern portion of the WSA which is moderate. There is a low to moderate probability that there would be a discovery of gold in the southern portion of the WSA prior to wilderness designation to establish valid existing rights. If mineral development did occur, an estimated 90 acres of surface disturbance would be associated with developing this resource, including portal landings, waste and tailing areas, and a millsite as well as 3 miles of roads for exploration and development.

Development of other mineral resources are not anticipated due to low potential, a lack of industry interest, or a lack of a readily identifiable resource.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action except for motorized vehicle access needs associated with livestock driveway use, placement of salt blocks, and maintenance of the existing fence. The use of water trucks, trailers and trucks to herd sheep on the livestock driveway would be accommodated outside the WSA along the existing transmission line boundary road. Placement of salt blocks in the WSA would be done on horseback. Motor vehicle use to maintain the existing one-half mile fence would be limited to transportation of fence materials; fence repair would be done by operators on horseback. This motor vehicle use would occur one day every 5 years. Grazing use would continue to be allotted at 293 AUMs.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Cultural resource management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action. However, excavations would require approval by the State Director. All excavation pits, if approved, would be filled and rehabilitated.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,165 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
1,095 Acres Nonwilderness

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 6,165 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the guidance of the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, cultural resources, scenic values and motorized recreational access. (See Map 8, p. 2-43.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 6,165 acres of the WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 675 visitor days of motorized use. All 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking or equestrian trails. Approximately 100 of those visitor days would continue to use the designated area by primitive means such as foot travel (hunters, cultural sightseers, etc.). The 225 visitor days of nonmotorized use related to hunting, cultural and geological sightseeings, etc., would remain stable in the long term. No recreational facilities are proposed due to the area's low use. Approximately 75 visitor days of motorized use by hunters would continue in the nondesignated area. Overall, recreation use would decrease from the present 900 visitor days to a projected 400 visitor days.

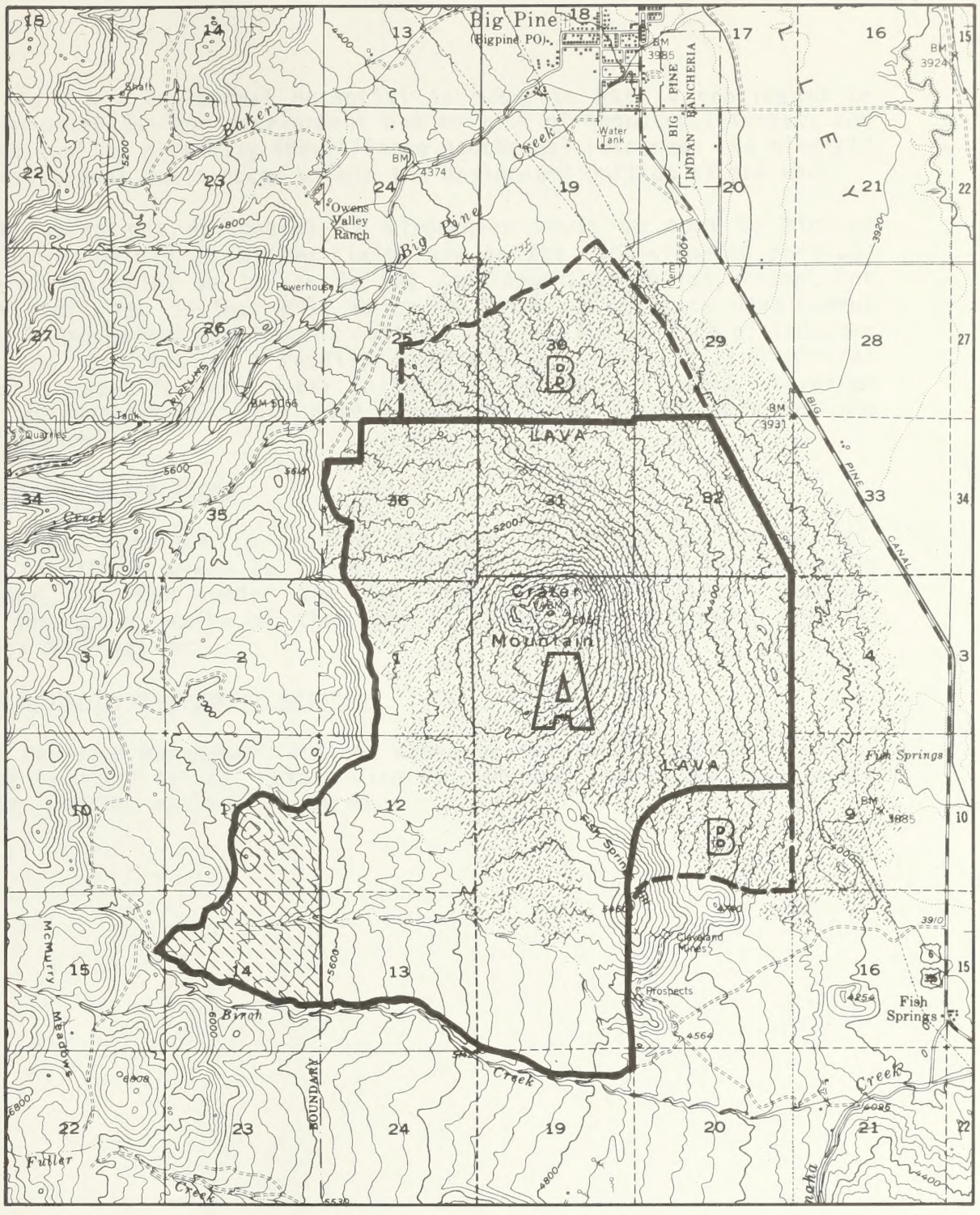
Wildlife Management Actions

The cooperative management plan to be developed between the BLM and the Inyo National Forest would apply to lands in the designated and nondesignated portions.

The proposed wildlife guzzler described under the Proposed Action would be located in the designated area near Fish Springs Hill and is the same as that described under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

A portion of the WSA encompassing 6,165 acres would be withdrawn from mineral entry. Approximately 33 mining claims would be evaluated for valid existing rights. All mineral potentials except for geothermal are considered to be low. Development potential for metallic and all other



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead

A
B

Area Recommended as Suitable

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA

CA-010-062

Partial Wilderness Alternative

MAP 8

minerals is low. Geothermal potential is moderate but is considered to have a low potential for development due to lack of industry interest; and due to the lack of a readily identifiable geothermal resource. No mineral/energy development would occur within the designated portion of the WSA.

The 1,095 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to mineral entry. Approximately 26 mining claims are in the nondesignated portion. All mineral potential is low as is the development potential, except for the area near Fish Springs Hill which is rated as moderate development potential. Geothermal development potential is low due to lack of industry interest and the lack of a readily identifiable resource. If a mineral discovery is made, it would occur in the Fish Springs Hill area. Development of an underground gold mine would occur as described under the Proposed Action.

Grazing Management Actions

The WSA would continue to provide 293 AUMs for sheep and cattle use. Existing facilities would be in the designated portion and maintained in the manner described under the All Wilderness Alternative. Overall, grazing operations would be the same as those described under the All Wilderness Alternative.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Cultural resource management actions would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action. State Director approval for excavations in the designated portion would be required.

TABLE 5
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA associated with development of an underground gold mine. These impacts would result in the loss of naturalness on 90 acres, and the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be impaired on approximately 1,200 acres. Impacts from continued motorized recreation use, livestock operations and maintenance of existing livestock facilities, as well as construction and maintenance of a proposed chukar water facility would generally be localized and insignificant due to the infrequent nature of these activities and low level of use. Impacts to wilderness values would predominantly only occur in the southern portion of the WSA and not affect the majority of the 7,260 acres within the WSA.	Wilderness designation would result in low positive benefits to all wilderness values throughout the WSA, particularly in the southwest portion of the WSA due to the elimination of 675 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Should valid existing rights not be proven, mining activities would be precluded. Wilderness values would be retained on 90 acres and within 1,200 acres in which the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude would not be impaired due to mining. However, should mining claims in the southeast portion of the WSA prove valid existing rights, mining activity would result in a loss of naturalness on 90 acres and impair the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude on 1,200 acres. Impacts resulting from livestock operations and construction and maintenance of a chukar water facility would generally be localized and insignificant with negligible benefits as a result of restricting three vehicle trips per year.	Wilderness designation would result in a low positive benefit to all wilderness values within the 6,165 acres designated wilderness, particularly in the southwest portion of the WSA due to the elimination of 600 visitor days of motorized recreation. Mining activity in the southeast portion of the WSA not designated wilderness would result in a loss of naturalness on 90 acres and the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude impaired on 1,200 acres. Impacts resulting from livestock operations and construction and maintenance would generally be localized and insignificant as described under the All Wilderness Alternative.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use. The entire WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use with the current 675 visitor days expected to remain stable.	There would be only minor impacts on motorized recreation use. Closure of the WSA would result in 675 visitor days of motorized recreation use foregone.	There would be only minor impacts on motorized recreation use. Approximately 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone.

TABLE 5 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Mineral Development	There would be no impact on mineral development. The entire WSA would remain open to mineral entry. However, the only potential development anticipated would be an underground gold mine in the southern portion of the WSA.	There would be only a minor impact on mineral development as a result of wilderness designation. Opportunities to explore and develop the WSA's generally low potential for mineral resources would be foregone. Should discovery occur within an area of moderate mineral potential in the southern portion of the WSA, a determination of valid existing rights would most likely result in development.	There would be only minor impacts on mineral development. Exploration and development of mineral resources could occur within the non-wilderness portion of the WSA particularly in an area of moderate potential. In the designated portion, no anticipated development of minerals would be foregone due to the low mineral potential.
Cultural Resources	There is a potential for adverse impacts to cultural resources within the WSA however these impacts would be avoided or minimized through monitoring, protection efforts and mitigation measures for projected mining activities.	There would be a positive benefit to cultural resources as a result of wilderness designation. The threat of impact-causing activities such as mining and continued motorized recreation use would be eliminated or reduced.	There would be a positive benefit to cultural resources as a result of wilderness designation of 6,165 acres within the WSA. There would not likely be any impacts to cultural resources on the 1,095 acres not designated due to the lack of predicted values.

SYMMES CREEK WSA
(CA-010-064)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
8,130 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 8,130 acres of public land in the Symmes Creek WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan and the Inyo National Forest Plan which emphasize livestock grazing, watershed protection, aquatic habitat, and motorized recreational access. Livestock use allocation would continue at 210 animal unit months (AUMs). (See Map 9, p. 2-49.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational use would continue on existing routes and trails. Visitor use is expected to remain stable at the current 600 visitor days annually. Approximately 500 visitor days are related to motor vehicle use, and include fishing, hunting and general sightseeing. Symmes Creek would continue to receive the remaining 100 visitor days annually with no expected change. Use is low and dispersed. Approximately 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used. No other development of roads or facilities is anticipated due to the area's low use and demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

A cooperative management plan would be developed between the BLM and the Inyo National Forest to maintain existing deer herds and the availability of habitat. In addition, a stream riparian habitat management plan for the two creeks would be developed.

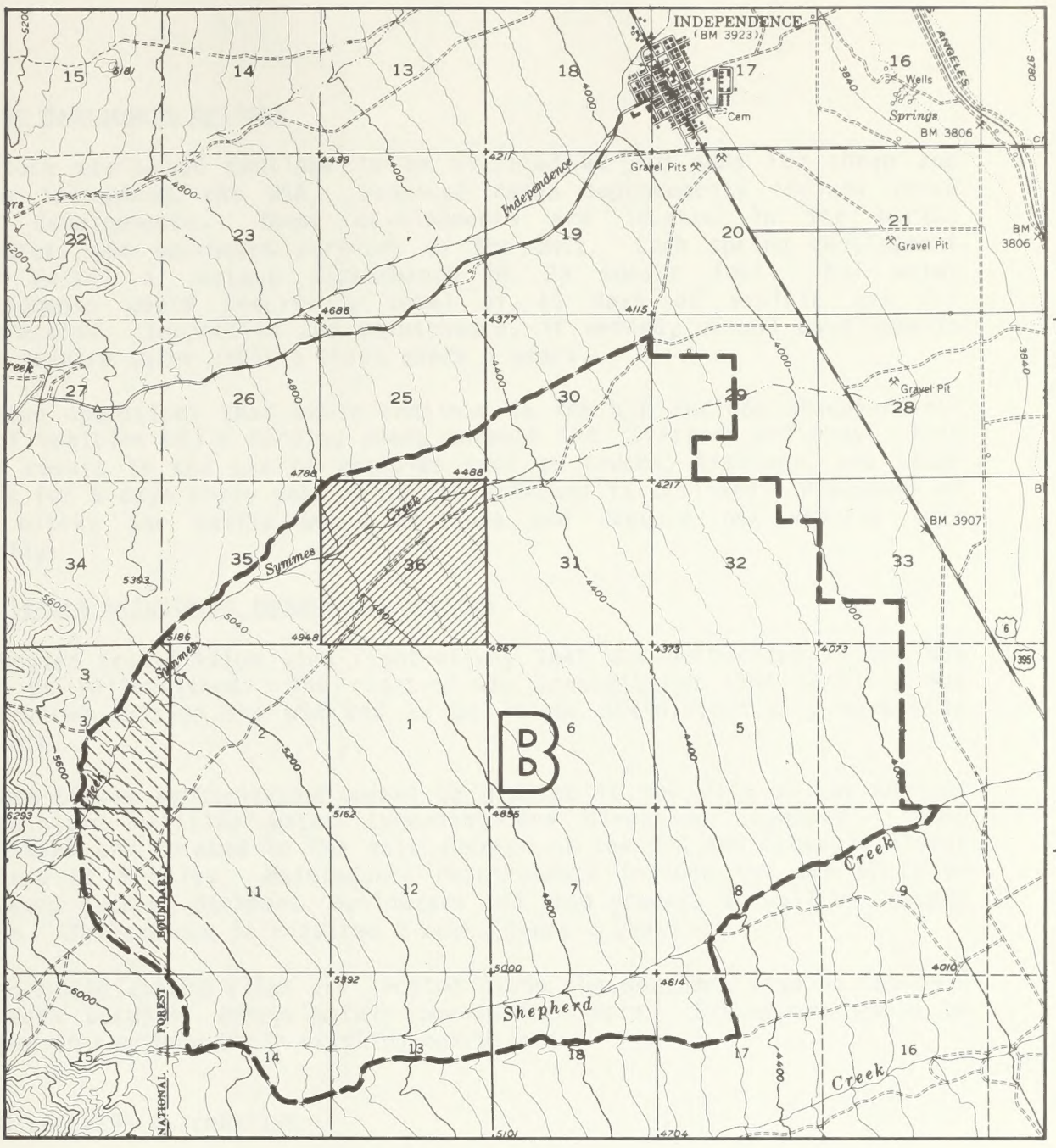
Fish habitat structures in Symmes Creek would be evaluated for effectiveness and removed or modified accordingly. A truck would be required 3 days to repair or remove the facilities.

The California Department of Fish and Game would continue stocking Shepherd and Symmes Creeks. A truck is used to transport fish to the release sites approximately 20 times per year. Release sites are located on the WSA's west edge.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. No mining claims are located in the unit. All mineral potentials are low except for nonmetallics which is moderate. Although rated moderate, nonmetallics such as sand and gravel are considered to have low development potential due to the unknown quality of this material and its ample availability outside the WSA. Development potential for all other minerals is low due to lack of interest and low potential. No mineral/energy development activities are anticipated in the WSA.

Alternatives



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

SYMMES CREEK WSA

CA-010-064

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 9

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 210 AUMs for sheep and cattle throughout the WSA. Proposed range improvements include three water developments. These developments are located in the north, southwest, and southeast portions of the unit. Each spring development would entail a surface disturbance of 25 square feet. All water developments would require a total of 15 days of vehicle use for construction. Inspection and maintenance, if needed, of all developments would require three vehicle trips every 3 years.

Existing operations that would continue in the WSA include sheepherders' use of vehicles while herding sheep through the livestock driveway. This would result in the use of vehicles such as trucks, trailers, and water trucks for 5 days every year while the driveway is utilized. Placement of salt blocks for cattle would continue and require one vehicle trip annually.

Land Tenure Adjustment Management Actions

The unused transmission line right-of-way that was authorized in the WSA would be relinquished. The right-of-way transmission line facility was constructed outside the WSA and is no longer administratively needed in the unit.

A right-of-way authorization would be granted to the City of Los Angeles to maintain existing water spreading and diversion channels. These facilities are located in the east quarter of the WSA and occupy a linear distance of 5 miles. Maintenance requirements include the use of heavy equipment such as backhoes, bulldozers and road graders as well as support trucks. Maintenance is required 2 weeks every 3 years.

The existing apiary sites are located along the southern edge of the unit and each occupies approximately one-quarter acre. Beekeepers would be allowed to continue their existing operations.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

8,130 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 8,130 acres in the Symmes Creek WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Six miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 210 AUMs. (See Map 9, p. 2-49 for WSA boundary.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational use would be prohibited in the WSA as a result of wilderness designation. Approximately 500 visitor days annually would be eliminated due to this prohibition. Six miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed. Under this alternative, the WSA would be managed to provide primitive settings to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking, fishing, and primitive camping. Projections indicate that a slight increase above the present 100 annual visitor use days to Symmes Creek would result in a long-term annual visitation of 150 visitor days. No recreational facilities exist and none are planned because of the area's low use and low demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, all 8,130 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. No mineral development would occur in the designated wilderness. Due to the area's marginal mineral potential, lack of mining claims, and mineral availability outside the WSA, no valid existing rights would be anticipated within the WSA.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action except for grazing operations related to livestock driveway use and placement of salt blocks. The use of trucks, trailers and water trucks to herd sheep on the livestock driveway would be accommodated outside the WSA without impairing herding operations. Placement of salt blocks would be done on horseback rather than by motor vehicle.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

Land tenure adjustment actions for this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action except for the three apiary sites which would be removed from their present locations along the south edge of the WSA. The apiary sites would be allowed to rehabilitate to a natural appearance.

TABLE 6
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE SYMMES CREEK WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Overall, impacts to wilderness values primarily naturalness and solitude would be negligible and for the most part short term. Construction and maintenance of three proposed livestock facilities as well as the repair or removal of fish structures would insignificantly add t the existing low levels of impact from motorized recreation use and vehicle use for livestock operations and maintenance of water-spreading and diversion channels. The continued existence of apiary sites, existing water-spreading and diversion channels, and proposed water developments would only result in less than 170 acres of impairment of the perception of naturalness.	There would be a slight positive benefit to wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude as a result of eliminating 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Locally, wilderness values would be negligibly improved as a result of the removal of three apiary sites and a reduction in vehicle use associated with existing livestock operations and maintenance of facilities. Construction and maintenance of proposed water developments for livestock and the continued maintenance of water-spreading and diversion channels would locally have a minor impact on naturalness and solitude on less than 110 acres.
Motorized Recreation Use	The entire WSA would remain open to motorized recreation use on existing routes and trails. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use.	Motorized recreation use totaling 500 visitor days would be foregone. This would result in only a minor impact as opportunities for motorized recreation use are available on other public lands outside the WSA, and the boundary roads would provide access to users that wish to continue using the area without vehicles.
Apiary Sites	There would be no impacts on apiary sites within the WSA. Beekeeping operations would be permitted at three existing apiary sites.	Wilderness designation would eliminate three apiary sites from the WSA. There would be an adverse impact on beekeeping operations due to the lack of suitable relocation sites.

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA
(CA-010-079)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
20,246 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 20,246 acres of public land in the Chidago Canyon WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, motorized recreational access, cultural resources, and utility expansion needs. Livestock use allocation would continue at 908 animal unit months (AUMs). (See Map 10, p. 2-57.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational use would continue on existing routes and trails. Approximately 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used as well as 11 miles of motorcycle and equestrian trails. Approximately 500 visitor days per year are attributed to motorized recreational use. This use would slowly increase to 700 visitor days in the long term. Nonmotorized recreational use would increase from the present 200 visitor days per year to a projected 300 visitor days. Overall, recreation use would increase from the current 700 visitor days per year to 1,000 visitor days. Use is dispersed and considered moderate. Use occurs during the cooler winter and spring months.

Wildlife Management Actions

A cooperative management plan would be developed between the BLM and the Inyo National Forest to maintain deer herds and availability of habitat.

Three small animal guzzlers in the center of the WSA would require inspection and maintenance with the use of a truck once every 3 years.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. One mining claim is located along the west edge of the WSA. There is moderate potential for metallic minerals in the WSA's west quarter, the remainder is low. Development potential is moderate in the west quarter and low elsewhere. Thus, development is not anticipated in areas of low mineral potential. A discovery of gold in the west quarter of the WSA would result in an underground mine totaling 100 acres of surface disturbance in addition to 4 miles of access road. The mining operation would include portals, air shafts, a millsite, tailings, and a waste rock disposal area.

Geothermal potential for the WSA is moderate. However, development potential is low due to lack of industry interest and a lack of a known geothermal reservoir in the area. All other minerals have low potential and low development potential, except for Bishop tuff which is currently in demand for decorative building stone. There is a high probability a tuff mining operation would be developed in the southeast portion of the WSA that requires less than 1 mile of access road and a 5-acre quarry area.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing use would continue to be allocated at 908 AUMs for sheep and cattle primarily in the north portion of the WSA. The 9-mile-long livestock driveway along the WSA's east side would continue to be used by sheep. Proposed projects include a 5-mile allotment boundary fence north of Chidago Canyon. Two water developments are also proposed along the west side of the WSA. The fence construction project would require the use of a vehicle for 25 days. Inspection and maintenance would require 10 days of vehicle use every 5 years. The two water developments would disturb an area of 25 square feet each. During construction of both projects, vehicle use would be required for a total of 10 days. Inspection and maintenance would require one vehicle trip every 3 years for both projects. Existing operations that would continue in the WSA include sheepherders' use of vehicles while herding sheep through the livestock driveway. This would result in the use of vehicles such as trucks, trailers, and water trucks for 5 days per year when the driveway is utilized. Placement of salt blocks for cattle would continue and would require one vehicle trip each year. Existing facilities in the northeast portion of the WSA include a 2-mile pipeline and four water troughs. Inspection and maintenance, if needed, would require two vehicle trips every year.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

A cultural resource survey to locate and record cultural resources and sites would be conducted throughout the WSA. Excavation or collection of cultural resources related to scientific research would be allowed. All excavation pits would be filled and rehabilitated.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor would be utilized. The corridor extends one-quarter mile to the east from the existing 4½-mile-long transmission line boundary along the western edge of the WSA. Planned and future high voltage transmission lines would be constructed in this corridor. Construction of less than 1 mile of access roads would be required within the WSA since the existing transmission line service road would provide access to the corridor. A powerline is currently proposed to be constructed within the existing right-of-way adjacent to the WSA.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

20,246 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 20,246 acres in the Chidago Canyon WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Thirty-six miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Use of the portion of an identified utility line corridor along the western boundary of the WSA would be precluded. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 908 AUMs. Discretionary management actions would be permitted only to preserve wilderness values.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 500 visitor use days that are estimated to occur in the area annually. Approximately 25 miles of vehicle routes and 11 miles of motorcycle and equestrian trails would be closed to motor vehicles and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Under this alternative, the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking and primitive camping. Projections indicate that current primitive recreational use such as horseback riding would increase from 200 visitor use days to 300 visitor days in the long term as a result of wilderness designation. No recreational facilities exist and none are planned due to the area's low use.

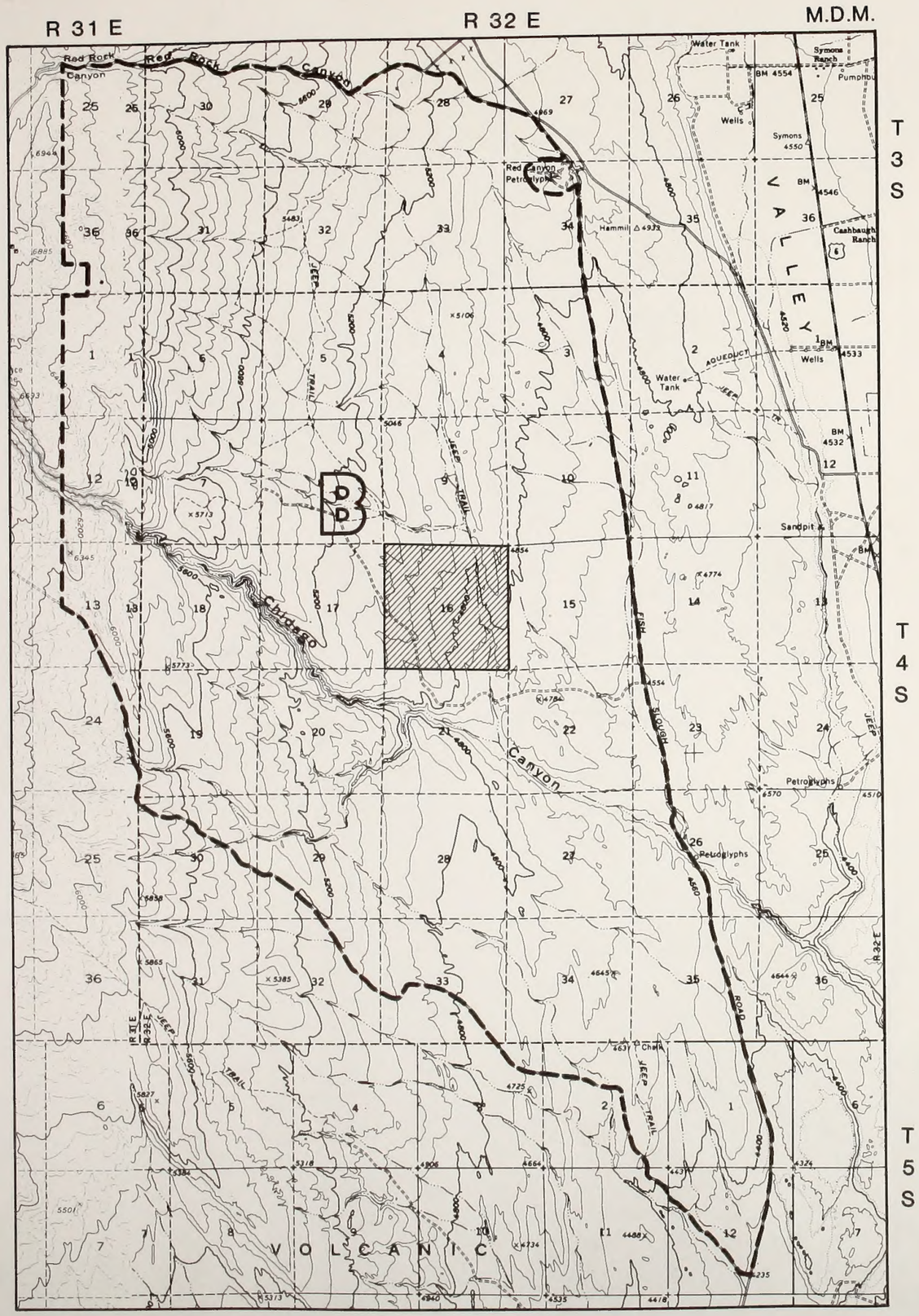
Wildlife Management Actions

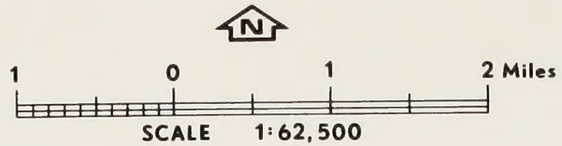
Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as those for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, all 20,246 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. There is moderate development potential for metallic minerals in the west quarter of the WSA and low elsewhere. Development is not anticipated in the low potential areas. A discovery of gold in this area of moderate potential would result in an underground mine totaling 100 acres of surface disturbance in addition to 4 miles of access road. The mining operation would include a millsite, tailings and a waste rock disposal area.

Geothermal potential for the WSA is moderate. However, development potential is low due to lack of industry interest and lack of a known geothermal resource. All other minerals have low potential, except for Bishop tuff which is currently in demand for building stone. This high demand and utilization would be foregone. Bishop tuff exists in areas outside the WSA.





LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA

CA-010-079

Proposed Action
(No Wilderness/No Action)
MAP 10

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action except for vehicle use related to maintenance of the proposed fence and placement of salt blocks. In addition, sheepherders' use of vehicles in the WSA to herd sheep along the 9-mile livestock driveway would be accommodated on Fish Slough Road, which is located outside the WSA. Placement of salt blocks would be done on horseback rather than by motor vehicle. Maintenance of the proposed fence would require one vehicles trip every 5 years to transport fence materials to the project site. Actual repair and maintenance would be done by personnel who ride horses to the site.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Cultural resource management actions under this alternative are the same as those for the Proposed Action except that State Director approval is required for excavation.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor that lies along the 4½-mile west boundary would not be used for placement of high voltage transmission lines. There is opportunity outside the WSA west of the existing transmission line right-of-way within the remaining one-quarter-mile-wide portion of the prescribed corridor for construction of new powerline facilities.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

8,326 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
11,920 Acres Nonwilderness

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 8,326 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the guidance of the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, motorized recreational access, cultural resources, and utility expansion needs. (See Map 11, p. 2-61.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

Wilderness designation would close approximately 44% of the WSA's 20,246 acres to all motorized recreational use. Approximately 2 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 5 miles of motorcycle trails would be closed within the 8,326 acres designated as wilderness and used for hiking and equestrian trails. Approximately 150 visitor days would be eliminated that are related to motor vehicle use. These visitors would shift their activities to the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Long-term use in the designated portion would increase from the present 200 visitor use days related to horseback riding to 300 visitor days. The 350 visitor use days of motorized recreation use in the nondesignated area would slowly increase

in the long term to 600 visitor days as 23 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 6 miles of motorcycle trails would remain open for use.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as those for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

A portion of the WSA encompassing 8,326 acres would be withdrawn from mineral entry. No mining claims or leases are located in the designated area. The west quarter of the WSA contains moderate metallic potential. The discovery of gold in this area would result in an underground mining operation as described in the All Wilderness Alternative. Geothermal potential for the WSA is moderate but development potential is low due to lack of industry interest and a lack of lease applications. All other minerals have low potential and low development potential, except for Bishop tuff which is currently in demand for building stone. This high demand and utilization would be foregone. Bishop tuff exists in areas outside the WSA.

The 11,920 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to mineral entry. One mining claim is located in the nondesignated area along the west boundary. Mineral potentials, development potentials and projected mineral actions in the nondesignated area would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Grazing Management Actions

The WSA would continue to provide 908 AUMs for sheep and cattle use. Existing grazing facilities, proposed spring developments, and grazing operations related to salt block placement as well as sheepherder vehicle use along 5¼ miles of the livestock driveway are in the nondesignated portion. Management actions related to these facilities and operations would be the same as those in the All Wilderness Alternative.

The proposed fence and 3¼ miles of the livestock driveway are located in the designated portion. Grazing management actions and facilities related to fence construction and maintenance as well as vehicle use along the livestock driveway would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

For public lands in the designated area, all cultural resource management actions would be the same as those under the All Wilderness Alternative.

For public lands in the nondesignated area, all cultural resource management actions would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor is within the nondesignated portion of the WSA along the 4¼-mile-long west boundary. Land tenure adjustment actions would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Alternatives

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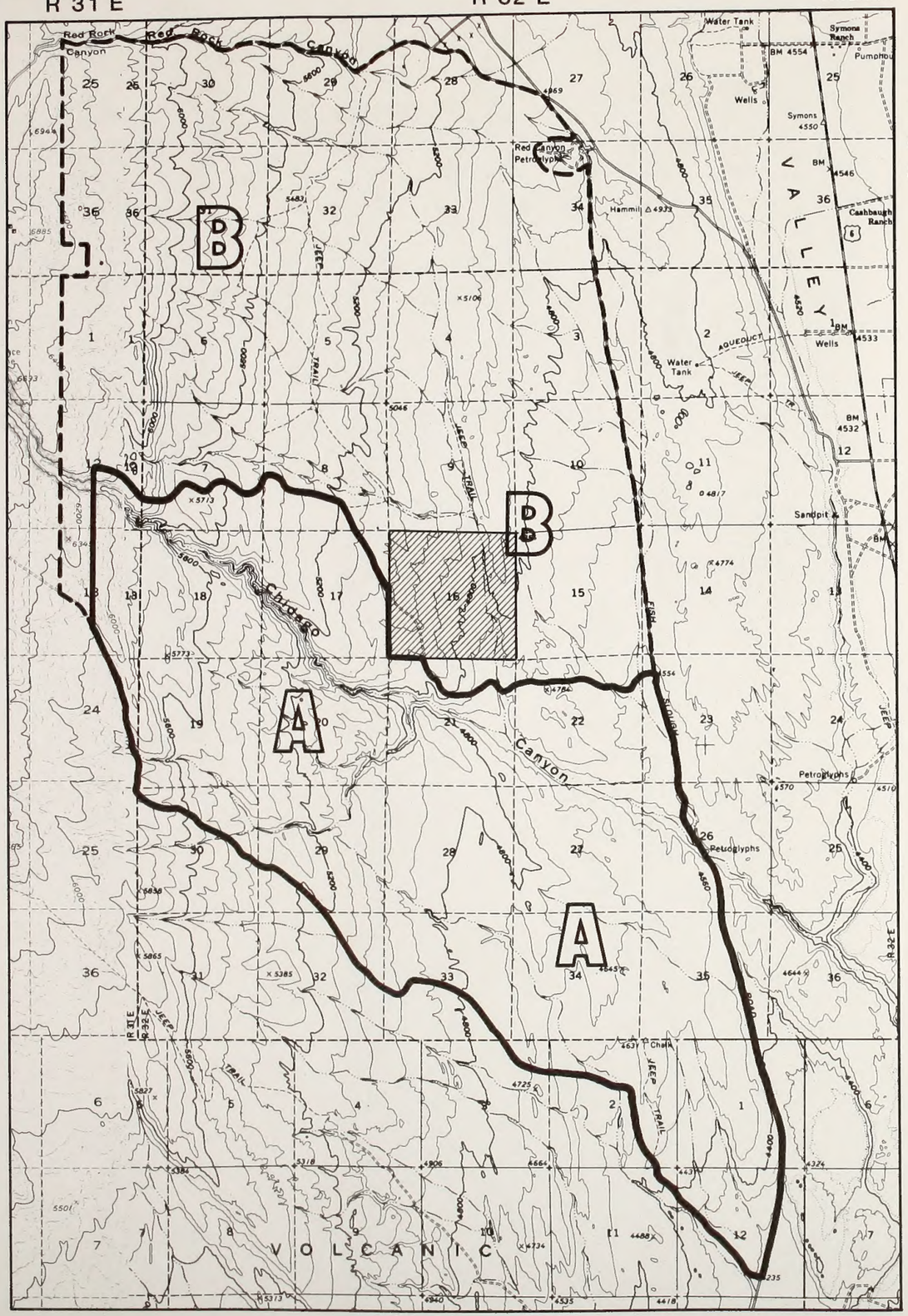
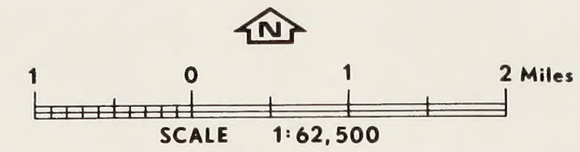
T 4 S

T 5 S





LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

A — Area Recommended as Suitable

B — Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA

CA-010-079

Partial Wilderness Alternative

MAP 11

TABLE 7
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CHIDAGO CANYON WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Wilderness values, particularly naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation would be adversely impacted by mining activities and development of the transmission line corridor. Additionally, projected low levels of motorized recreation use as well as continued livestock operations and projected livelivestock projects would result in slight to minor impacts on naturalness and solitude. Overall, there would be a direct loss of naturalness on 105 acres with the perception of naturalness impaired over an area of 4,690 acres primarily in the northwest portion of the WSA. Solitude would be disrupted within 2,000 acres as a result of mining operations. Short-term impacts ranging from negligible to minor would occur as a result of construction and maintenance of livestock projects. Crucial winter habitat for mule deer would be lost on 100 acres as a result of the underground gold mining activities. Geologic features could be impacted or lost on 105 acres as a result of mining activities. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no impacts other than very negligible impacts are anticipated for special features including raptor nesting habitat and cultural values.	Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values in the WSA by eliminating motorized recreation use (500 visitor days) as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the western boundary. Wilderness values in the northwest portion of the WSA would be adversely affected by development of an underground gold mine due to the high probability of determination of valid existing rights. Construction and maintenance of existing and proposed livestock facilities would result in slight to minor localized impacts on naturalness and negligible to minor short-term impacts on solitude. Overall, naturalness within the WSA would be lost on 100 acres with the perception of naturalness impaired on 2,290 acres. Solitude would be diminished on 2,000 acres as a result of mining activities. Crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost and geological features could be lost on 100 acres as a result of mining activities.	Designation of 8,326 acres within the WSA as wilderness would result in slight positive benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude as a result of eliminating 150 visitor days of motorized recreation use and prohibiting mining of decorative building stone. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and special features would be slightly enhanced. Within the 11,920 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, projected motorized recreation use (600 visitor days), development of an underground gold mine, construction and maintenance of livestock projects and development of the transmission line corridor would adversely affect wilderness values. Naturalness would be lost on 100 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired on 4,290 acres. The sense of solitude would be diminished within 2,000 acres surrounding the projected underground gold mine. Additionally, construction of the transmission line corridor would result in localized, short-term impacts. Approximately 100 acres of crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost in the northwest portion of the WSA. Overall, there would be a minor impact to wilderness values with moderate, localized impacts anticipated.

TABLE 7 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CHIDAGO CANYON WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is anticipated to increase slowly from the existing 500 visitor days to a total of 700 visitor days.	Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 500 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. Due to the projected low level of use within the WSA and the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA, there would be a slight impact on motorized recreation use.	There would be a slight impact as wilderness designation would preclude 150 visitor days of motorized recreation use within the designated portion of the WSA. However, within the non-designated portion there would be no impacts on motorized recreation use with the current 350 visitor days anticipated to increase to a total of 600 visitor days.
Transmission Line Development	There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 4 1/2 miles of the west boundary.	There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter-mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use.	There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width of the corridor within the WSA along 4 1/2 miles of the west boundary would be in the portion not designated as wilderness.
Mining of Decorative Building Stone	There would be no impact on the mining of decorative building stone. Mineral sales would be permitted. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff is projected for the WSA.	Mining of decorative building stone, including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. There would be only a minor impact as Bishop tuff is available in areas outside the WSA.	There would be a minor impact on mining of decorative building stone within the 8,326 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral sales including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff. Within the 11,920 acres not designated wilderness mineral sales would be permitted. However, no mining of decorative building stone is anticipated due to the lack of identified sources. There would be no impact.

FISH SLOUGH WSA
(CA-010-080)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
14,450 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 14,450 acres of public land in the Fish Slough WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, motorized recreational access, cultural resources, and utility expansion needs. Livestock grazing use would be allotted at 377 animal unit months (AUMs). (See Map 12, p. 2-67.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational use would continue on existing routes and trails. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by mountain bikers, hunters, general sightseers, and motorcyclists. Approximately 500 visitor use days occur in the WSA and are expected to increase to 800 visitor days in the long term. Of this total use, recreational ORV use is expected to slowly increase from the existing 350 visitor days to a projected 550 visitor days. Recreation use is dispersed. Recreation use occurs during the cooler winter and spring months. Future demand for the area is expected to increase.

Wildlife Management Actions

A cooperative habitat management plan would be developed between the Inyo National Forest and the Bureau to maintain existing deer herds and associated habitat conditions.

The existing Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan prescribes protection of the aquifer recharge source within the WSA in order to protect Fish Slough wetland habitat which lies outside the WSA. The aquifer in the WSA would be protected as described in the plan.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. No known mining claims exist in the WSA. Geothermal potential is moderate but considered to have low development potential due to lack of industry interest. No lease applications have been filed. Nonmetallic mineral potential and development potential is moderate due to current demand and mining of Bishop tuff, a decorative building stone, on adjacent Bureau lands. It is projected that a quarrying operation to mine tuff would occur in the southeast portion of the WSA, and would entail a 5-acre quarry area as well as 2 miles of access road. The probability for this type of development is high. All other minerals in the WSA have low potential, thus development of these minerals is not expected.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing use would continue to be allotted at 377 AUMs for sheep use. The 5-mile-long livestock driveway along the WSA's east side would continue to be used by sheep. Proposed projects consist of a 1-mile-long fence along the southern tip of the unit. The fence would control livestock from using the northern portion of the unit as well as preventing livestock from drifting into the adjoining Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The proposed fence would require one vehicle for 5 days during construction. Inspection and maintenance, if needed, would require the use of a vehicle 2 days every 5 years.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

A cultural resource survey to locate and record cultural resources and sites would be conducted in 20% of the WSA.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor would be utilized. The corridor extends one-quarter mile to the east from the existing 2¼-mile-long transmission line boundary. Planned and future high voltage transmission lines would be constructed in this corridor. A current proposal for the existing right-of-way that parallels the western boundary outside the WSA calls for upgrading the existing steel towers to accommodate an additional powerline while utilizing shared steel towers. Construction of less than 1 mile of access road would be required within the WSA since the existing transmission line service road would provide access to the corridor.

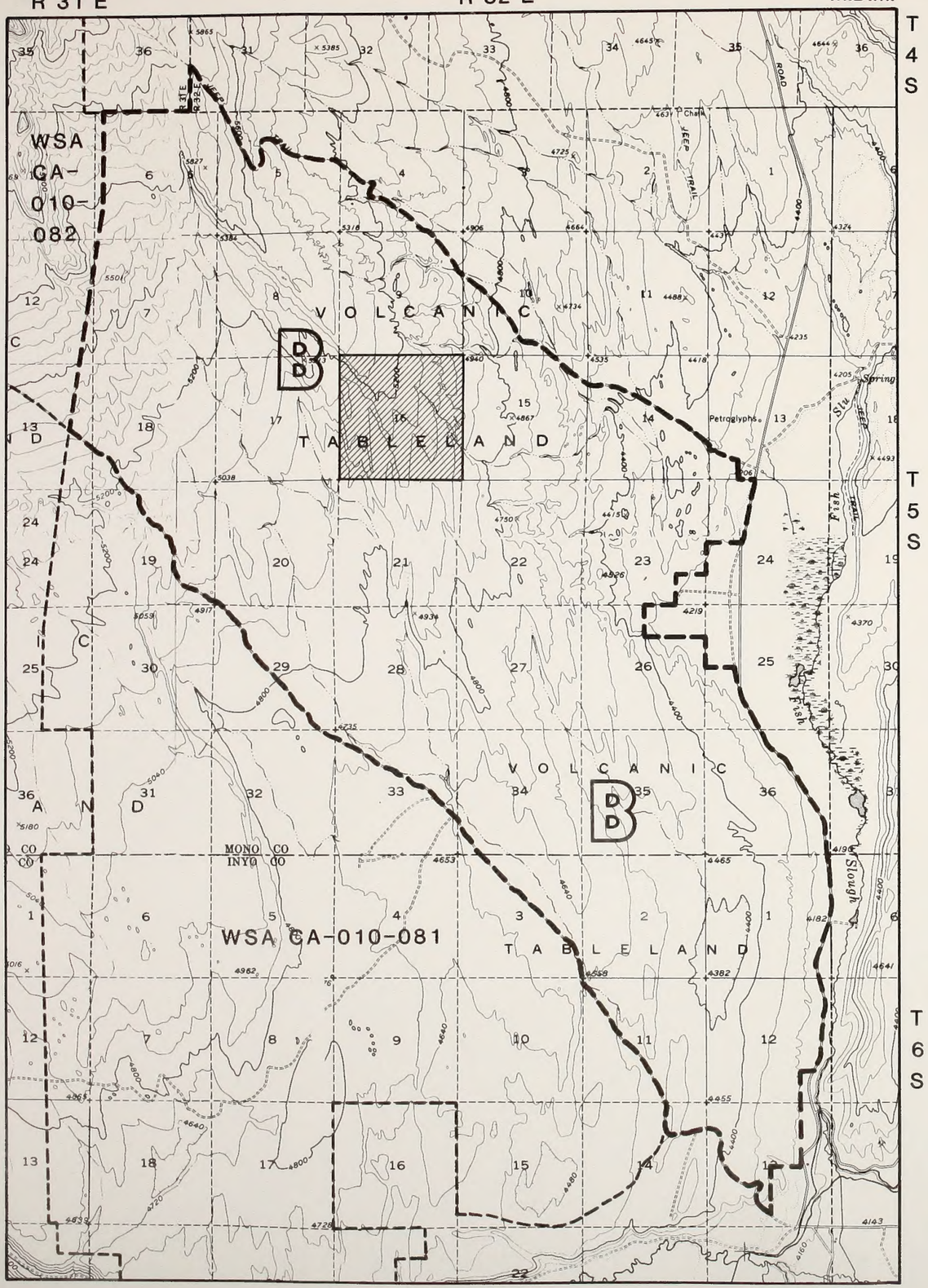
ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

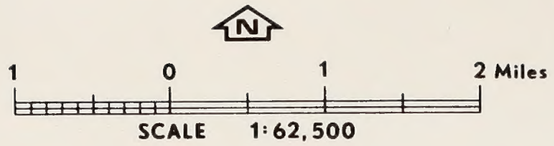
14,450 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 14,450 acres in the Fish Slough WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Eight miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Use of the portion of the transmission line corridor within the western boundary of the WSA would be precluded. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 377 AUMs. Discretionary management actions would be permitted only to preserve wilderness values.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 350 visitor use days. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motor vehicles and used as equestrian and hiking trails. Under this alternative the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking and primitive camping. Projections indicate that current primitive recreation





LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

FISH SLOUGH WSA

CA-010-080

Proposed Action
(No Wilderness/No Action)
MAP 12

use such as horseback riding, hunting, etc., would increase from the current 150 visitor days to 250 visitor days in the long term as a result of wilderness designation. No recreational facilities exist and none are planned due to the area's low use.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, 14,450 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. No known mining claims exist in the unit. There is moderate nonmetallic mineral potential and development potential in the WSA primarily for Bishop tuff which is in demand for decorative building stone, and currently being mined on adjacent areas outside the WSA. Under this alternative, this demand and utilization would be foregone. Bishop tuff exists in areas outside the WSA. All other mineral potential in the WSA is low, thus development of these minerals is not anticipated.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would vary slightly from those described under the Proposed Action. The proposed fence inspection and maintenance activity would require vehicle use 1 day every 5 years to drop off materials at the project site. Personnel who would repair or maintain the fence would ride into the area on horseback rather than use motor vehicles. In addition, sheepherders' use of water trucks, trailers, and trucks while herding sheep along the livestock driveway would be accommodated outside the designated area along the Fish Slough boundary road. This would not impair herding operations. Actual grazing use in the WSA requiring motor vehicles such as water trucks, trailers, and trucks by sheepherders would continue at a rate of 7 days per year primarily during the month of June.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Cultural resource management actions under this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

A current proposal calls for construction of a new powerline within the existing right-of-way. The existing steel towers would be replaced with towers of a different design that would accommodate the existing powerline as well as the proposed transmission line. The remaining utility line corridor that lies along the 4½-mile west boundary would not be used for placement of additional high voltage transmission lines. There is some opportunity west of the existing transmission line boundary outside the WSA to accommodate the prescribed corridor and construction of new power-line facilities.

The adjoining Casa Diablo WSA shares the common powerline boundary feature with the Fish Slough WSA. If both WSAs are entirely designated as wilderness, future powerline facilities would have to be routed to the west, around Casa Diablo WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVES

14,240 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
210 Acres Nonwilderness

This Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 14,240 acres as wilderness which is over 98% of the WSA. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. This area represents all of the WSA except for portions of a utility corridor along the 2¼ miles of the WSA's western boundary. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the guidance of the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan to accommodate utility expansion needs (see Map 13, p. 2-71).

Recreation Use Management Actions

A very large portion of the WSA would be closed to all motorized vehicle use. Since only 210 acres along the 2¼-mile west boundary are in the nondesignated area, the management actions for the designated area, under this alternative would be the same as those described under the All Wilderness Alternative. No vehicle routes are in the nondesignated area. Recreation use projections and losses in the designated area would be the same as those described in the All Wilderness Alternative. Virtually no recreation use is occurring in the nondesignated portion and future projections indicate that the existing situation would continue over the long term.

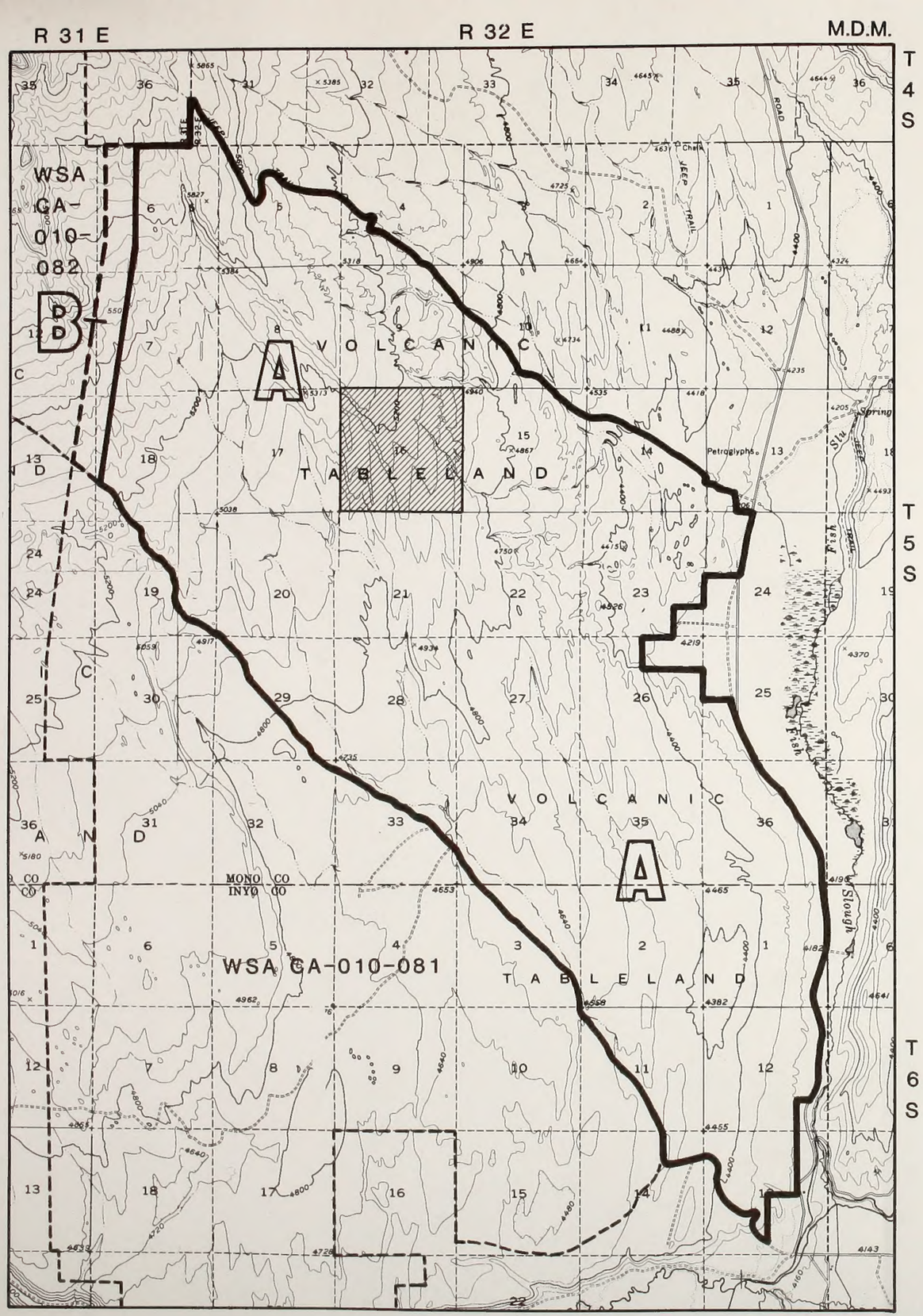
Wildlife Management Actions

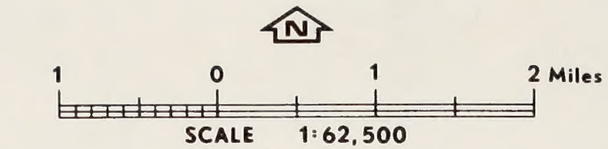
Wildlife management actions for nondesignated and designated portions of the unit would be the same at those described in the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, 14,240 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation. For those public lands in the designated portions of the unit, mineral/energy development management actions would be the same as those described in the All Wilderness Alternative.

The 210 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to mineral entry. Mineral potentials, development potentials, and projected mineral development in the nondesignated area would be the same as under the Proposed Action.





LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- A — Area Recommended as Suitable
- B — Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

FISH SLOUGH WSA

CA-010-080

Partial Wilderness Alternative

MAP 13

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 377 AUMs for sheep throughout the WSA. Under this alternative, grazing management actions in the designated area would be the same as those under the All Wilderness Alternative.

The nondesignated portion contains no primitive vehicle routes. Sheepherders would continue grazing sheep in this area; the west edge of the unit. Sheepherders would use vehicles along the transmission line boundary road in this area while grazing sheep in a 210-acre, 2¼-mile-long strip of nondesignated area. This would not impair the operator's grazing operations.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Cultural resource management actions under this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor is within the nondesignated portion of the WSA adjacent to the 2¼-mile-long west boundary. Land tenure adjustment actions would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

TABLE 8
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE FISH SLOUGH WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Mining activities associated with the 5-acre quarry for decorative building stone and development of the 2 1/2-mile transmission line corridor along the western boundary would result in the primary impacts on wilderness values. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over 2,400 acres and there would be a direct loss of naturalness on 5 acres. Solitude within the WSA would be diminished within a 600-acre area surrounding the mining activities resulting in a moderate impact. Additional short-term disruptions to solitude would occur within an area of 2,000 acres along the transmission line corridor during powerline construction activities. Projected motorized recreation use (550 visitor days) and livestock grazing activities including construction of 1 mile of fence would result in slight to minor impacts to wilderness values. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be slightly impacted on a localized basis as a result of projected motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, and development of the transmission line corridor. There would be slight localized impacts to special features.	Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by eliminating 350 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the western boundary. The proposed livestock fence would result in slight to minor localized impacts to wilderness values and impair the perception of naturalness on 50 acres. Special features including habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geological features would be slightly enhanced.	Wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced within the 14,240 acres of the WSA (over 98%) designated as wilderness. Motorized recreation use (350 visitor days) and mining activities for decorative building stone would be eliminated, benefiting wilderness values. The proposed 1-mile livestock fence would result in slight to minor impacts to wilderness values and impair the perception of naturalness on 50 acres. Special features including habitat for pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geological features would be slightly enhanced. Within the 210 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, development of the 2 1/2-mile transmission line corridor would result in adverse impacts on wilderness values including impairing the perception of naturalness within a 2,000-acre viewshed that extends into the designated portion of the WSA. Short-term disruptions would also occur within the same 2,000-acre area as a result of powerline construction activities within the transmission line corridor.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is anticipated to increase slowly from the existing 350 visitor days to a total of 550 visitor days.	Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 350 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. Due to the projected low level of use within the WSA and the	Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 350 visitor days would be foregone within the designated portion of the WSA which amounts to over 98% of the

Alternatives

TABLE 8 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE FISH SLOUGH WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use (Cont.)		availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA, there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.	WSA. There is no motorized vehicle use or existing primitive vehicle routes within the remaining 210 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness. Overall there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.
Transmission Line Corridor Development	There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 2 1/2 miles of the west boundary.	There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter-mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use. However, should the Casa Diablo WSA also be designated wilderness there would be a potential moderate impact to the future development of the transmission line corridor, since this corridor would be entirely within the areas designated as wilderness.	There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter mile width within the WSA along 2 1/2 miles of the west boundary would be in the portion not designated as wilderness.
Mining of Decorative Building Stone	There would be no impact on the mining of decorative building stone. Mineral sales would be permitted. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff is projected for the WSA.	Mining of decorative building stone, including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. There would be only a minor impact as Bishop tuff is available in areas outside the WSA.	There would be a minor impact on mining of decorative building stone within the 14,240 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral sales including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishof tuff. Within the 210 acres not designated wilderness mineral sales would be permitted. However, no mining of decorative building stone is anticipated. There would be no impact.

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA
(CA-010-081)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
11,840 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 11,840 acres of public land in the Volcanic Tableland WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, motorized recreational access, cultural resources, and utility expansion needs. Livestock grazing use would be allotted at 741 animal unit months (AUMs). (See Map 14, p. 2-77.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

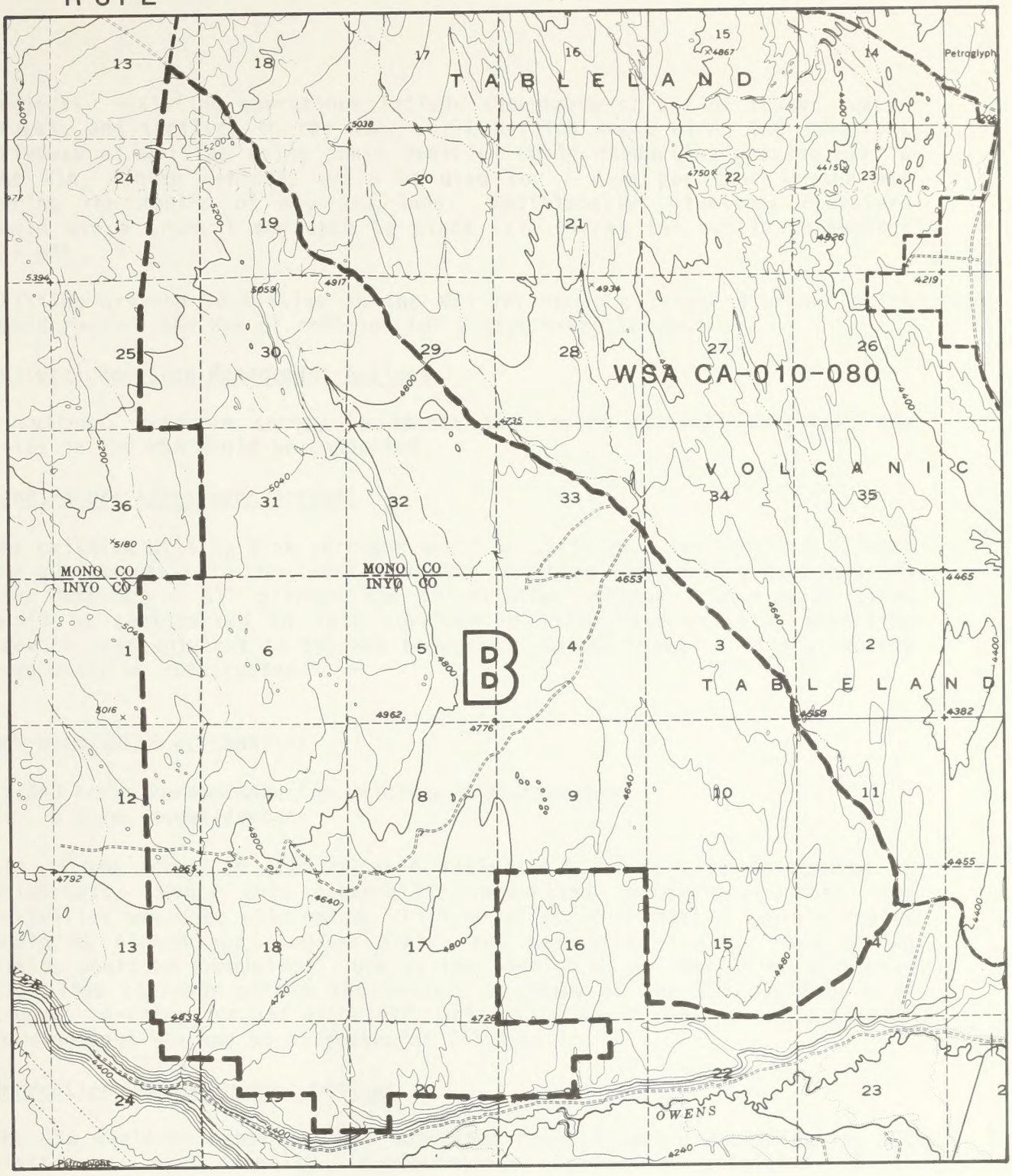
All motorized recreational use would continue on existing routes and trails. Approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by mountain bicyclists, motorcyclists, horseback riders, and general sightseers. Approximately 400 visitor use days annually occur in the WSA and are expected to increase to 700 visitor use days in the long term. Of this total use, 300 visitor days are related to recreational ORV use with an increase of 200 visitor days projected. Recreation use is dispersed. Recreation use access is primarily during the cooler winter and spring months. Future demand for the area is expected to increase.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. There are no known mining claims in the WSA. Geothermal potential is moderate but considered to have low development potential due to lack of industry interest. No lease applications have been filed. Nonmetallic mineral potential is high as well as high development potential. There is current demand for the nonmetallic mineral, Bishop tuff. Mining of Bishop tuff currently occurs outside the WSA. It is projected that a quarrying operation to mine the tuff would occur in the southeast portion of the WSA and would entail a 5-acre quarry area as well as 1 mile of access road. The probability for this development is high. All other minerals in the WSA have low potential. No development of these minerals is anticipated due to their low potential.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing use would continue to be allotted at 741 AUMs for sheep and cattle use. The 5¼-mile-long livestock driveway along Casa Diablo Road would continue to be used by sheep and cattle. Proposed projects include three water developments. These developments would be located in the south, east and central portions of the WSA. Each development would occupy an area of 25 square feet. During construction, vehicle use would be required for a total of 15 days for three projects. Inspection and maintenance, if needed, would require the use of a vehicle 3 days every 3 years for all



N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

B Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA

CA-010-081

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 14

projects. Existing operations include sheepherders' use of trucks, water trucks, and trailers in the WSA, while herding sheep along the livestock driveway as well as using these vehicles while conducting grazing use in the WSA. These vehicles would be used for 7 days per year in the WSA during the months of May and June. Additionally, livestock operators would use a truck 1 day each to place salt blocks for cattle throughout the WSA.

Existing grazing facilities in the WSA include one large reservoir which would require the use of vehicles for 2 days every 10 years.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

A cultural resource survey to locate and record cultural resources and sites in the WSA would be conducted.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor would be utilized. The corridor extends one-quarter mile to the east from the existing 6-mile-long transmission line boundary. All planned and future high voltage transmission lines would be constructed in this corridor utilizing the existing powerline service road adjacent to the WSA boundary. An additional 1 mile of access road would be constructed.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

11,840 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 11,840 acres in the Volcanic Tableland WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Fifteen miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Use of the portion of an identified transmission line corridor within the western boundary of the WSA would be precluded. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 741 AUMs.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 300 visitor use days annually. Approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motor vehicles and used as equestrian and hiking trails. Under this alternative, the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking and primitive camping. Projections indicate that current primitive recreation use such as horseback riding, hunting, etc., would increase from the current 100 visitor use days annually to 200 visitor days in the long term as a result of wilderness designation. No recreational facilities exist and none are planned due to the area's low use.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, all 11,840 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. No known mining claims exist in the WSA. Geothermal potential is moderate but considered to have low development potential due to lack of industry interest. No lease applications have been filed. There is high nonmetallic mineral potential and high development potential in the WSA; primarily for Bishop tuff which is in demand for decorative building stone and currently being mined in adjacent areas outside the WSA. Under this alternative, this demand and utilization would be foregone. All other mineral potentials in the WSA are low, thus development of these minerals is not anticipated.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would vary slightly from those described under the Proposed Action. Placement of salt blocks for cattle would be done on horseback rather than by truck. In addition, sheepherders' use of trucks, water trucks, and trailers for herding sheep along the livestock driveway would be prohibited. Sheepherders would be required to use their vehicles on the Casa Diablo Road to herd sheep. This requirement would not impair their operations. In addition, sheepherders would use their vehicles while conducting grazing use in the designated area approximately 4 days per year primarily during May and June.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

Cultural resource management actions would be the same under this alternative as those for the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

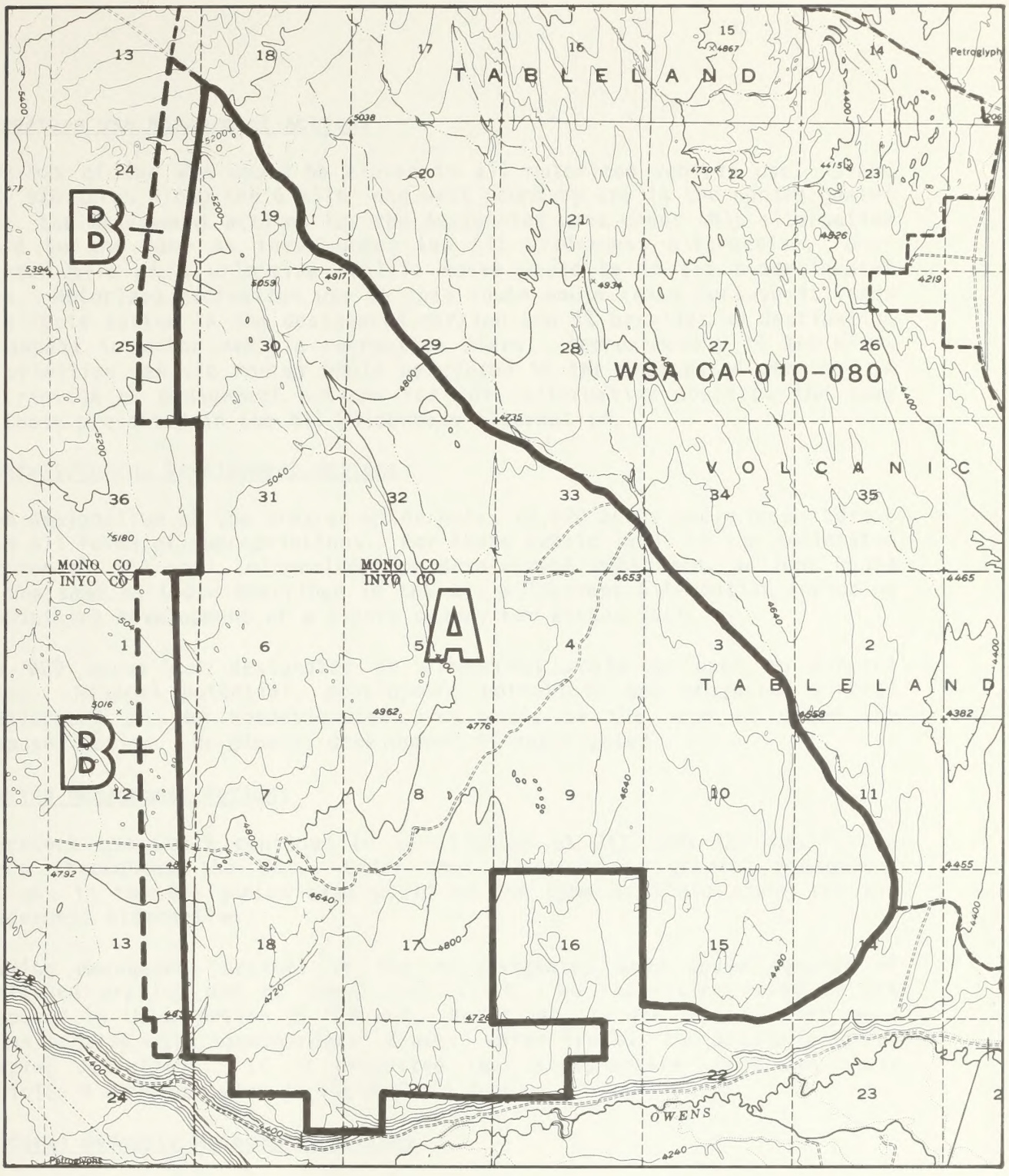
The existing one-quarter-mile-wide portion of the utility line corridor that lies within the WSA along the 6-mile-long west boundary would not be used for placement of high voltage transmission lines. There is opportunity outside the WSA west of the existing transmission line right-of-way within the remaining one-quarter-mile-wide portion of the prescribed corridor for construction of new powerline facilities.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

10,920 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
920 Acres Nonwilderness

This Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 10,920 acres as wilderness which amounts to over 92% of the WSA. This represents all of the WSA except for portions of a utility corridor along 6 miles of the WSA's western boundary. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the guidance of the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan to accommodate utility expansion needs.

Alternatives



N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

A — Area Recommended as Suitable

B — Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA

CA-010-081

Partial Wilderness Alternative

MAP 15

Recreation Use Management Actions

Over 92% of the WSA would be closed to all motorized vehicle use. Since only 920 acres along the 6-mile-long west boundary are in the nondesignated area, the management actions for the designated area under this alternative would be the same as those under the All Wilderness Alternative. One-quarter mile of a primitive vehicle route would be in the nondesignated area. Motorized recreation use on this route would cease because it leads to a route system in the designated portion and it provides no destination or appeal to motor vehicle recreation users. Approximately 14 3/4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed in the designated portion. A description of management actions for this alternative would be the same as those presented in the All Wilderness Alternative.

Minerals/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, 10,920 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations. For those public lands in the designated portion of the unit, mineral/energy development management actions would be the same as those described in the All Wilderness Alternative including prohibiting development of a 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff.

The 920 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to mineral entry. Mineral potential, development potentials and projected mineral development in the nondesignated area would be the same as under the Proposed Action. No mineral development is anticipated.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 741 AUMs for cattle and sheep throughout the WSA. Under this alternative, grazing management actions in the designated area would be the same as those under the All Wilderness Alternative.

Grazing management actions in the nondesignated area would consist of continued grazing use by sheep and cattle. No facilities exist or are proposed in this portion of the WSA. Motor vehicle use in this area would be associated with sheepherders' trucks, water trucks, and trailers during grazing operations. It is projected that sheepherders would use their vehicles 4 days per year during May and June.

Cultural Resource Management Actions

For lands both under the status of nondesignation and designation, cultural resource management actions under this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor lies in the nondesignated area adjacent to the 6-mile-long west boundary. Land tenure adjustment actions would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

TABLE 9
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	The primary impacts on wilderness values would originate from mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA and development of the 6 miles of transmission line corridor along the western boundary. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over 2,960 acres with a direct loss of naturalness on 5 acres. Solitude within the WSA would be diminished within an area of 600 acres as a result of mining activities with additional short-term disruptions within a 2,500-acre area along the transmission line corridor during powerline construction activities. Projected motorized recreation use and livestock grazing activities would result in slight to minor impacts to wilderness values. Habitat for pronghorn antelope would not be noticeably impacted. Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities would be slightly impacted on a localized basis as a result of continued motorized recreation use, development of the 6 miles of transmission line corridor, and the 5-acre quarry for decorative building stone. There would be no adverse impacts on the pronghorn antelope habitat.	Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by eliminating motorized vehicle use (300 visitor days) as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the western boundary. Proposed livestock projects would result in slight to minor, localized impacts to wilderness values. Habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope would be slightly enhanced.	Wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced within the 10,920 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Motorized recreation use and mining activities for decorative building stone would be eliminated, benefiting wilderness values. Proposed livestock projects would result in slight to minor localized impacts to wilderness values. Within the 920 acres designated as wilderness, development of the transmission line corridor along the western boundary of the WSA would impair the perception of naturalness over a 2,500-acre area with additional short-term disruptions to solitude as a result of construction activities. Habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope would be slightly enhanced except for minor disruptions of use as a result of construction activities within the transmission line corridor.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is anticipated to increase slowly from the existing 300 visitor days to a total of 500 visitor days.	Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 300 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. Due to the projected low level of use within the WSA and the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA, there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.	Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 300 visitor days would be foregone within the designated portion of the WSA which amounts to over 93% of the WSA. No motorized recreation use is anticipated on the one-quarter mile of existing primitive vehicle route within the remainder of the

Alternatives

TABLE 9
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use (Cont.)			WSA not designated wilderness. Overall there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.
Transmission Line Corridor Development	There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 6 miles of the west boundary.	There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter-mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use. However, the available corridor width outside the WSA would limit the opportunity for multiple transmission line development which could lead to moderate adverse impacts on the development of the transmission line corridor.	There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width of the corridor within the WSA along 6 miles of the west boundary would be in the portion not designated as wilderness.
Mining of Decorative Building Stone	There would be no impact on the mining of decorative building stone. Mineral sales would be permitted. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff is projected for the WSA.	Mining of decorative building stone, including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. There would be only a minor impact as Bishop tuff is available in areas outside the WSA.	There would be a minor impact on mining of decorative building stone within the 10,920 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral sales including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff. Within the 920 acres not designated wilderness mineral sales would be permitted. However, no mining of decorative building stone is anticipated. There would be no impact.

CASA DIABLO WSA
(CA-010-082)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
9,167 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 9,167 acres of public land in the Casa Diablo WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal, the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Benton-Owens Valley MFP and the Inyo National Forest Plan which emphasize livestock grazing, wildlife, motorized recreational access, and utility expansion needs. Livestock grazing use would be allotted at 144 animal unit months (AUMs). (See Map 16, p. 2-87.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational use would continue on existing routes and trails. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by hunters, sightseers, etc. Motorized vehicle use within the WSA is designated as limited to existing routes and trails. Recreation use would remain stable in the long term at 350 visitor use days with 300 visitor days associated with motorized recreational use. No facilities are proposed due to the area's low use. Use is dispersed.

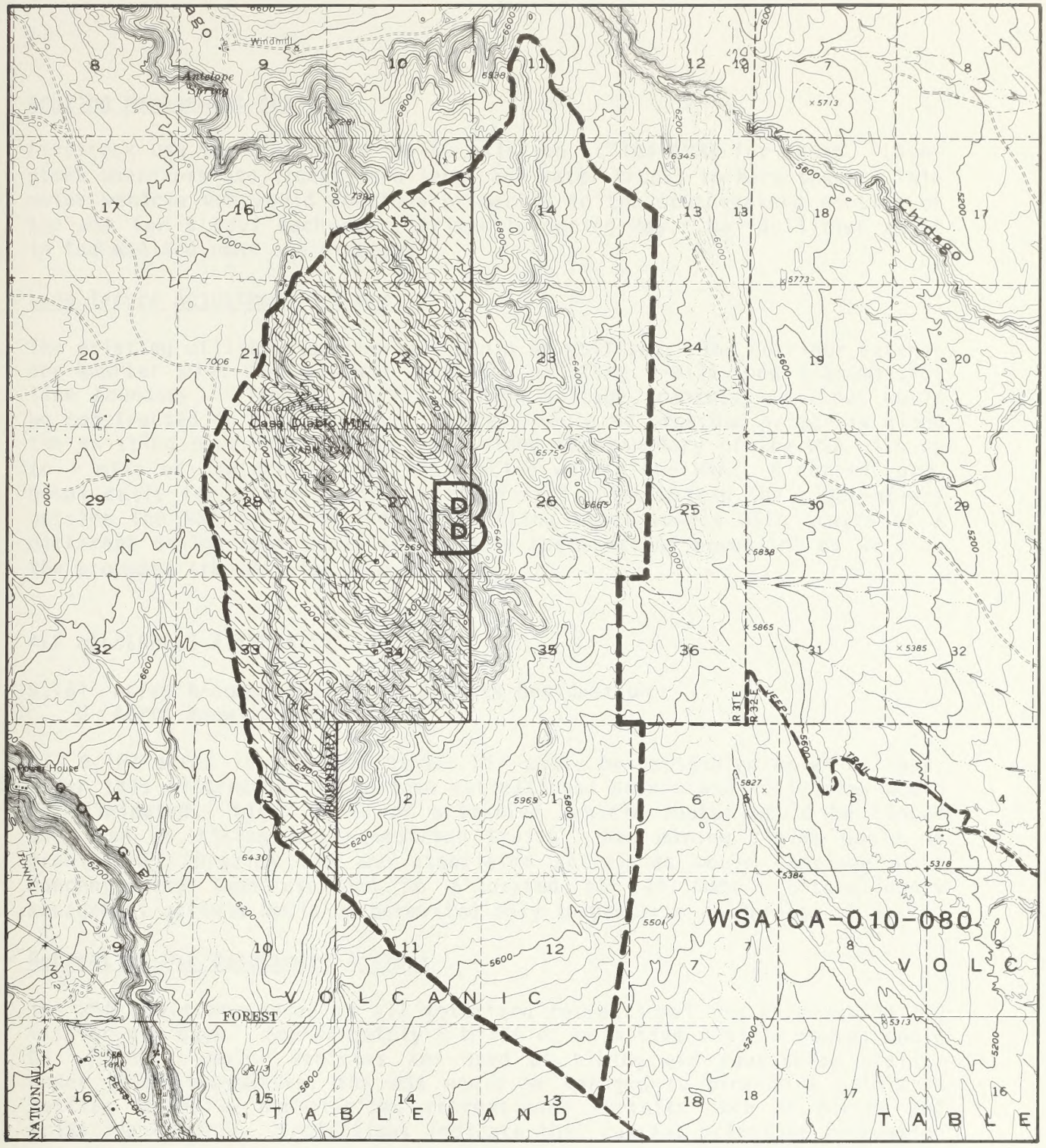
Wildlife Management Actions

A cooperative management plan between the Bureau and the Inyo National Forest is prescribed to maintain deer populations and the availability of habitat.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Approximately 32 mining claims are located in the WSA, most near Casa Diablo Mountain. Casa Diablo Mountain contains existing surface disturbances related to mining activities totaling 350 acres, which include tailings, waste rock sites, and mine shafts. The continued use of the WSA for metallic mineral development is expected to be high on Casa Diablo Mountain and moderate elsewhere. It is anticipated that an underground mine for metallics would also be developed along the Bureau and Forest Service boundary at the center of the unit. Surface disturbances would total 120 acres in this area. Mining activities would include 8 miles of access roads, tailings, a waste rock disposal area, and a millsite.

Geothermal potential is moderate but development potential is low due to lack of industry interest. No leases have been filed in the area. All other mineral potentials are low, thus no development is anticipated.



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1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead

B

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

CASA DIABLO WSA

CA-010-082

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 16

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 144 AUMs for sheep. Livestock operators use trucks, trailers, and water trucks to herd sheep. This motor vehicle use would continue primarily in the southeastern portion of the WSA for 5 days each year, primarily during May. No facilities exist in the WSA and none are proposed.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The existing utility line corridor would be utilized. The corridor extends one-quarter mile to the west from the existing 5-mile-long transmission line boundary. Planned and future high voltage transmission lines would be constructed in this corridor. Access would be provided primarily along the existing powerline service road along the boundary of the WSA with up to 1 mile of new access road constructed within the WSA. A current proposal calls for upgrading the existing facilities within the right-of-way outside the WSA by replacing the existing steel towers with towers of a different design that would accommodate the existing powerline as well as the proposed transmission line.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,167 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 9,167 acres in the Casa Diablo WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Eight miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 144 AUMs. Discretionary management actions would be permitted only to preserve wilderness values.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 300 visitor use days. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motor vehicles and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Under this alternative, the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking and primitive camping. Projections indicate that current primitive recreation use such as hunting would remain stable at 50 visitor use days over the long term. No recreational facilities exist and none are planned due to the area's low use.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for this alternative would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness, all 9,167 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. The area contains moderate to high mineral development potential with approximately 30 mining claims in the Casa Diablo Mountain area and two claims on the Forest Service and Bureau boundary in the center of the unit. There are approximately 350 acres of mining-related surface disturbances near Casa Diablo Mountain consisting of mine shafts, tailings and waste rock disposal areas. It is anticipated that a determination of valid existing rights would result in the development of an underground mine for metallics along the Forest Service and Bureau boundary near the center of the unit. The surface disturbances from mining activities would total 120 acres. These activities include 8 miles of access roads, a millsite, tailings, and a waste rock disposal area.

Although geothermal potential is moderate, development potential is low due to lack of industry interest. No leases have been filed in the area. All other mineral potentials are low, thus development is not anticipated for these minerals.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would allow continued use of 144 AUMs by sheep. However, sheepherders would be required to use motor vehicles, while herding sheep, on the east boundary transmission line road. This action would not impair sheepherder operations since vehicle use could be easily accommodated outside the WSA.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The portion of the utility line corridor that extends one-quarter of a mile into the WSA along 5 miles of the eastern boundary would not be available for construction of potential transmission lines. There is opportunity within the remaining one-quarter-mile width of the corridor that lies outside the WSA for construction of future transmission lines. A current proposal for upgrading the existing transmission line within the existing right-of-way outside the WSA to accommodate an additional powerline would not be affected by wilderness designation.

Should the adjoining Fish Slough WSA also be designated wilderness, the utility corridor would not be available for future development except within the existing right-of-way. Future transmission lines would most likely be constructed to the west of the Casa Diablo WSA.

TABLE 10
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CASA DIABLO WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	The primary impacts on wilderness values would originate from mining activities near Casa Diablo Mountain resulting in a loss of naturalness on 120 acres. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over 2,400 acres as a result of the mining activities and development of the utility corridor for high voltage transmission lines along the eastern border. Solitude would be diminished within a 700-acre area surrounding the mining activity. Construction of transmission lines would result in short-term impacts to solitude along the 5-mile utility corridor. Continued motorized recreation use (300 visitor days) on 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would maintain slight impacts to naturalness and solitude. Crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost on 120 acres as a result of mining activity.	Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by precluding development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the east boundary and eliminating 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use. The high probability of valid existing rights determination for existing mining claims near Casa Diablo Mountain would lead to development of an underground silver mine. Mining activity would result in a loss of naturalness on 120 acres and an impairment of the perception of naturalness as well as the sense of solitude within a 700-acre viewshed. Crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost on 120 acres as a result of mining activity.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which is projected to remain stable at the current 300 visitor days.	Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 300 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. There would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use due to the low level of use displaced from the WSA and the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA.

TABLE 10 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE CASA DIABLO WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Transmission Line Corridor Development	There would be no impact on development of the one-half-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 5 miles of the east boundary.	There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use. Should the Fish Slough WSA also be designated wilderness, there would be a potential moderate impact to the future development of the transmission line corridor, since 2 1/2 miles of the corridor would be entirely within areas designated as wilderness.

EXCELSIOR WSA
(CA-010-088)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
9,100 Acres Nonwilderness

None of 9,100 acres of public land in the Excelsior WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal, the lands would be managed in accordance with the BLM's existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. Livestock grazing will continue at existing levels. ORV use will be limited to existing primitive vehicle routes. Development of geothermal resources will occur.

Recreation Use Management Actions

Motorized recreation use will continue on approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes throughout the 9,100-acre WSA. Recreation use is estimated at 100 visitor days per year and is all related to motorized vehicle access primarily hunting. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned due to the low use and low demand. Visitor use is not anticipated to increase noticeably, if at all, in the foreseeable future.

Wildlife Management Actions

A plastic rain collection storage basin would be installed in the north-central portion of the WSA to benefit pronghorn antelope and nongame wildlife species. An area approximately 40 feet by 40 feet in size would be disturbed. Installation would occur over a 2-day period and require two vehicle trips. Yearly inspection and maintenance would require one vehicle trip.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Due to current geothermal exploration within 3 miles of the WSA in the Mono-Long Valley KGRA, development of a low temperature 10-Mw geothermal resource would likely occur in the western portion of the WSA. Exploration and development roads would total 5 miles. Approximately 40 acres of surface disturbance would ultimately occur with development including six production well pads, pipelines, and a small power plant.

No other mineral development is anticipated in the WSA since mineral potential for metallic and nonmetallic minerals is considered to be no better than low.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing will continue at the present level of 408 AUMs for cattle in the WSA. A water development with a windmill is proposed for the central portion of the WSA approximately 1 mile from the boundary. Surface

disturbance would be approximate 100 square feet and the windmill would be 30 feet tall. Construction would occur over a 10-day period and would require 15 vehicle trips.

Inspection and maintenance of the proposed windmill would result in three vehicle trips over 3 days each year. Placement of salt blocks would continue to occur 1 day a year and require vehicle use.

Fuelwood Harvest Management Actions

Noncommercial fuelwood harvest of dead and down, or dead and standing juniper would be permitted on 880 acres of accessible juniper stands in the northern portion of the WSA. Based on the availability of deadwood and the low demand it is estimated that less than 40 cords would be harvested annually, requiring less than 20 vehicle trips.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,100 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 9,100 acres in the Excelsior WSA would be designated as wilderness. Motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated under this alternative. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails.

Recreation Use Management Actions

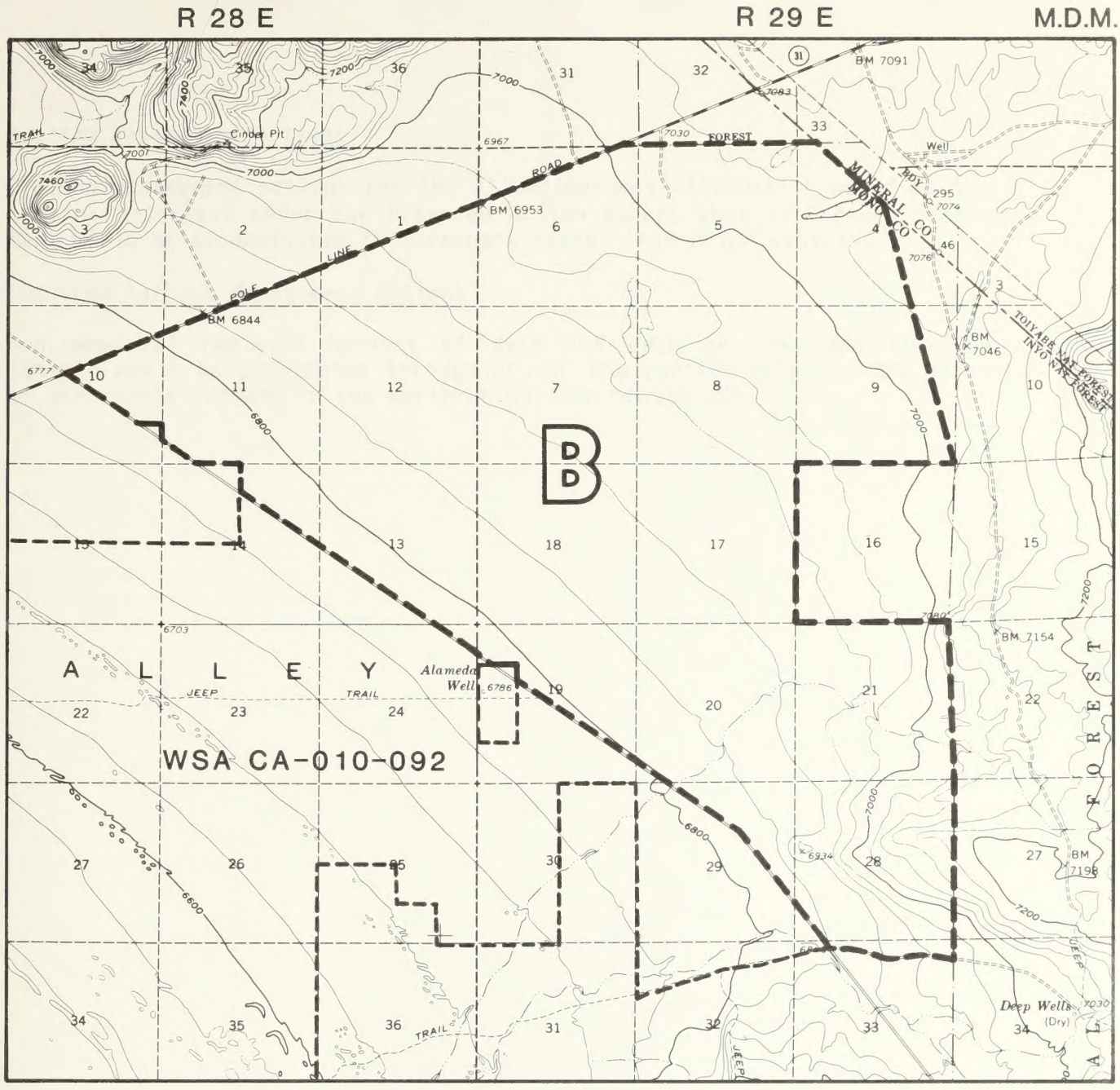
The entire 9,100-acre WSA would be closed to motorized recreational use including approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Closure of the WSA would eliminate 100 visitor days of motorized recreational use. Approximately 30 visitor days associated with the current motorized recreational use would continue as nonmotorized use, utilizing boundary roads as access for hunting which is a primary activity in the WSA. The 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be used as hiking and equestrian trails. However, no maintenance activities would be anticipated. Currently no recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire 9,100-acre WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry upon wilderness designation. Development of a moderate geothermal resource potential would not occur. No mining claims exist and none are projected since the mineral potential is considered to be no better than low. Therefore, no mineral exploration or development is anticipated in the WSA.



N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

D
D

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

EXCELSIOR WSA

CA-010-088

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 17

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as described under the Proposed Action except that salt block placement would be accomplished on horseback rather than motor vehicle.

Fuelwood Harvest Management Actions

Noncommercial fuelwood harvest of dead and down or dead and standing juniper would be prohibited throughout the WSA particularly the 880 acres of accessible juniper in the northern portion of the WSA.

TABLE 11
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE EXCELSIOR WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	On an overall basis there would be a minor impact on wilderness values within the 9,100-acre Excelsior WSA. Impacts in the western portion of the WSA from geothermal development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on up to 2,000 acres. Continued low levels of motorized recreation use, fuelwood harvesting and construction and maintenance of the livestock water development and the wildlife rain collection storage basin would result in negligible to minor local impacts. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited in the WSA as a result of geothermal development and continued motorized recreation use. The pronghorn antelope habitat as a special feature of the WSA, would be limited on 40 acres due to geothermal development, however, it would benefit from the rain collection storage basin and the livestock water development.	Overall the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would result in a slight to minor enhancement of the long-term protection of wilderness values. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use, prohibition of geothermal exploration and eliminating fuelwood harvesting would result in minor benefits to wilderness values. Proposed wildlife improvements including maintenance would have slight adverse impacts on localized naturalness and solitude. There would be a slight benefit to the WSA's pronghorn antelope habitat.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which would remain at approximately the current annual level of 100 visitor days.	Motorized recreation use totaling 100 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. While opportunities outside the WSA for motorized recreation use are somewhat limited, the low level of use being displaced from the WSA would be accommodated. There would be slight impacts on motorized recreation use.

TABLE 11 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE EXCELSIOR WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Geothermal Resource Development	There would be no impact on geothermal exploration and development in the WSA.	Exploration and development of a projected 50-Mw geothermal resource would be foregone. Over the long-term, this would result in a less than minor impact.

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA
(CA-010-090)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness
54,941 Acres Nonwilderness

The Proposed Action for the Granite Mountains WSA is not to designate any of the WSA as wilderness. The WSA will be managed under the guidance of the Benton-Owens Valley and Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plans as well as the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan that emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, motorized recreational access, and minerals management. Livestock grazing would be allotted as 2,855 AUMs plus an increase of 569 AUMs as a result of vegetative treatments. Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource would occur as would a projected 145-acre open pit gold mine. Motorized recreation use would continue to be limited to existing routes and trails.

Recreation Management Actions

All motorized recreation use would be permitted on approximately 40 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Of the 1,250 visitor days of recreation use in the WSA, 1,000 visitor days are associated with motorized access. The Sierra Safari, a motorcycle poker run, accounts for 400 of the visitor days. This yearly motorcycle event would continue to use portions of the vehicle routes in the WSA during the first weekend in June. Nonmotorized recreation use is estimated at no more than 250 visitor days. Use is generally dispersed throughout the WSA with the exception of the Sierra Safari. It is anticipated that motorized recreation use would slowly increase by 100 visitor days to a total of 1,100 visitor days.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire 54,941 acres within the WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Approximately 60 mining claims are in the WSA, with the majority located in the western portion. There is a moderate potential for occurrence of gold in the western portion of the WSA with a moderate development potential. It is anticipated there will be medium-sized discovery of a disseminated gold deposit in this western portion of the WSA. An open-pit mining operation would be developed that would result in 145 acres of surface disturbance including the open pit, waste rock disposal area, tailings, and millsite facilities. Additionally, 5 miles of exploration and development roads would be constructed.

There is a high potential for geothermal resources in the western third of the WSA, with a moderate potential for development within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA. While the presence or absence of a viable geothermal resource has not been proved, there are lease bids and applications for the western portion of the WSA. It is anticipated the interest in this area would lead to discovery and development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource in the Warm Springs area. Surface disturbance would total approximately 80 acres for

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA
CA-010-090
Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)
MAP 18

WSA CA-010-092

R 28 E | R 29 E | R 30 E

T 3 N | T 2 N | T 1 N | T 1 S

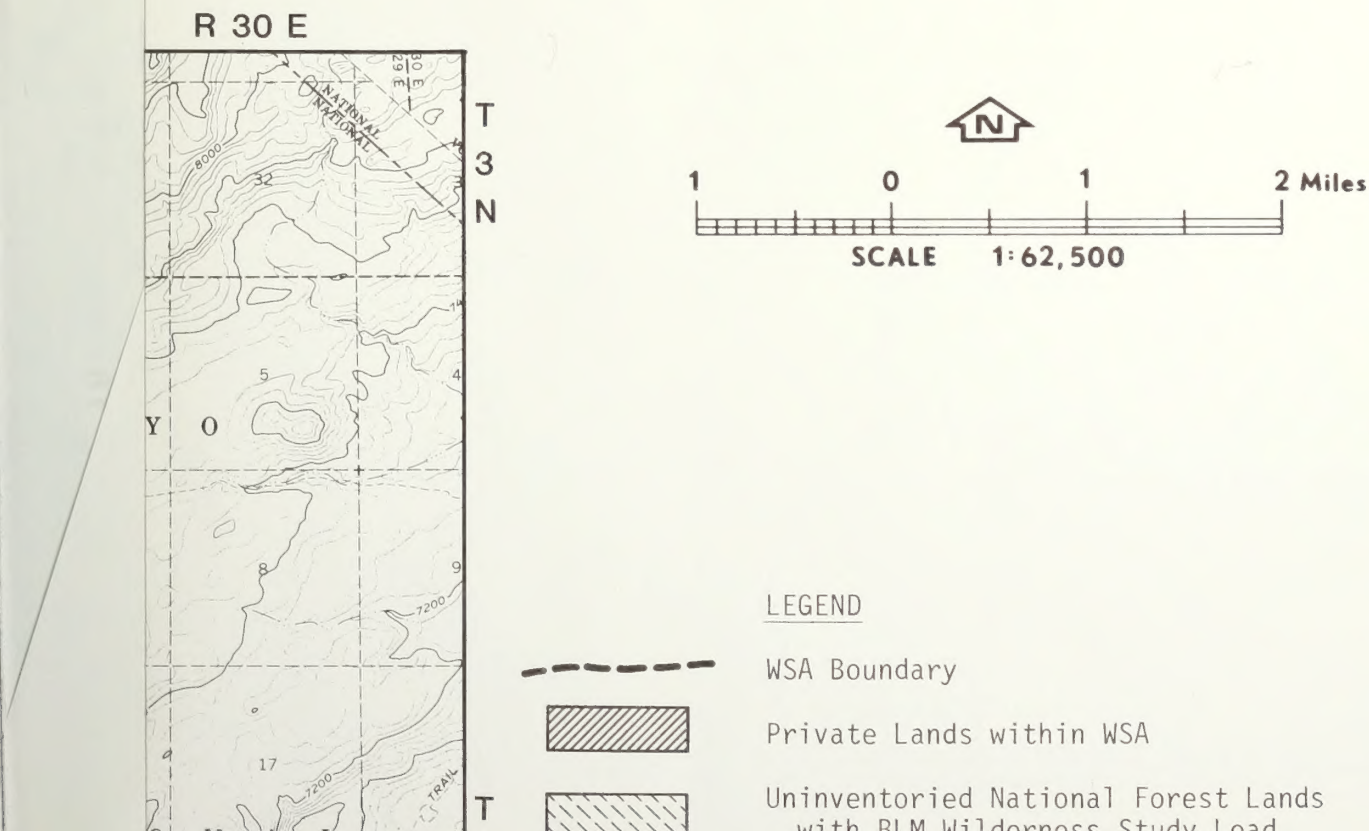
R 27 E | M.D.M.

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead
- Former BLM Lands now in Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area
- B — Area Recommended as Nonsuitable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SCALE 1:62,500
LEGEND
WSA Boundary
Private Lands within WSA
Uninventoried National Forest Lands
with BLM Wilderness Study Lead

drill pads, well pads, and production facilities including a power plant. Additionally, 12 miles of exploration and development roads would be constructed.

No other mineral/energy development is anticipated within the WSA due to low potential for occurrence and low development potential. There is a moderate potential for uranium however development potential is low with no activity projected.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use in the WSA would continue to be allotted at 2,855 AUMs with the primary season of use being from July 1 to October 15 for the Mono Lake Allotment (635 AUMs for sheep), the Mono Mills-Dorn Allotment (1,230 AUMs for sheep) and the Granite Mountain Allotment (537 AUMs for cattle or sheep). The season of use for the Mono-Sand Flat Allotment runs from December 1 to May 31 (435 AUMs for cattle).

An additional 569 AUMs would be available as a result of 8,000 acres of planned vegetation manipulations to increase forage production. Total livestock grazing use would be 3,424 AUMs upon completion of the vegetation manipulations over a 5-year period. Five prescribed burns would occur throughout the central portion of the WSA totaling 5,500 acres over a period of 5 years. Each of the prescribed burns would range in size from 800 to 1,500 acres and occur over a 2-day period. The operations would utilize helitorch burning techniques requiring the use of a helicopter and four support vehicles including a fire truck, fuel truck, and two pickup trucks. Support vehicles would primarily utilize existing vehicle routes with cross-country travel limited to emergency or fire control situations. A temporary staging area for fueling and mixing would require one-quarter acre of surface brushing. Upon completion of the California Vegetation Management EIS it is anticipated that the two chemical sprays would be implemented. Initially a 500-acre area south of Granite Mountain along the boundary of the WSA would be chemically treated to increase forage production by manipulating the vegetation. The operation would utilize a helicopter for aerial application for one day. A temporary staging area (one-quarter acre) for mixing and loading the chemical spray would be located adjacent to an existing vehicle route along the WSA boundary and would only require surface brushing. Two support vehicles would be necessary for one day. The following year a 2,000-acre spray would occur northeast of Granite Mountain. The operation would take place over a 4-day period utilizing a helicopter for aerial application. A temporary staging area (one-quarter acre) for mixing and loading the chemical spray would be located adjacent to an existing vehicle route and would only require surface brushing. Two support vehicles would be necessary over the 4-day period.

Three new water developments would be located in the southeastern portion of the WSA with three additional water developments located in the west-central portion of the WSA. Each water development would result in 25 square feet of surface disturbance. The water developments would require 5 days of vehicle use for each project. Inspection and maintenance, if needed, would require the use of one vehicle trip every 3 years for each project resulting in six vehicle trips per year for all projects.

Two pipelines and water troughs would be constructed in the southwest portion of the WSA in the Dry Creek area. Each pipeline would extend one mile from existing water tanks outside the WSA. The pipelines would be buried and require 10 days each for construction. Use of several support vehicles such as trucks would be required during the 10 days for each project. Inspection and maintenance would require the use of a truck for 2 days each year.

Existing operations that would continue in the WSA include sheepherders' use of vehicles including trucks, trailers, and water trucks for approximately 30 days per year. Salt block placement would require the use of a vehicle for 2 days annually. Four miles of existing fenceline in the northwest portion of the WSA requires maintenance at 5-year intervals. A vehicle would be used for this maintenance for 6 days during the 5-year interval. Inspection and maintenance of 2 miles of existing pipelines requires the use of a vehicle for 2 days every year.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

Approximately 1,100 acres of pinyon-juniper in the east half of the WSA would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is a low demand for fuelwood harvesting. Approximately 50 cords of fuelwood is available which would result in 25 vehicle trips per year. Interest in casual use of pinyon nut collecting is high. Less than 50 visitor days with 20 vehicle trips associated with access are projected for pinyon nut collecting. No change in fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting is expected to occur in the long term.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

54,941 Acres Recommended for Wilderness
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 54,941 acres in the Granite Mountains WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative motorized recreation access and activities would be eliminated and approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes closed. Livestock grazing would continue to be allotted at the current level of 2,855 AUMs with no increases. Projected geothermal resource development and mining activities would be prohibited. The entire WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use.

Recreation Management Actions

The entire 54,941-acre WSA would be closed to motorized recreational use including approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The Sierra Safari motorcycle poker run would not be permitted to utilize routes within the WSA. Annual visitor use associated with motorized access would decrease by 1,000 visitor days. Nonmotorized use would increase from the present 50 visitor days to a projected 200 visitor days primarily due to continued use by visitors previously using motorized access. No recreation facilities currently exist in the WSA and none are planned.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Wilderness designation would close the entire 54,941 acres within the WSA to all forms of mineral entry. The approximately 60 mining claims within the WSA would become invalid due to the lack of mineral discovery and a low probability for valid existing rights. Exploration and development of a moderate potential for gold and a high potential for geothermal resources in the WSA would be prohibited.

Grazing Management Actions

Under the All Wilderness Alternative livestock use would remain at the current use level of 2,855 AUMs within four allotments as described in the Proposed Action. Vegetation manipulation projects including the two proposed chemical sprays (2,500 acres) and five prescribed burns (5,500 acres) to increase forage production by 569 AUMs would be prohibited. Construction and maintenance of the six water developments and two pipelines would occur as described under the Proposed Action.

Existing sheepherder operations would continue to require 30 days of vehicle use as described under the Proposed Action. Maintenance of the existing pipeline would continue to require 2 days of vehicle use. Vehicle use for maintenance of the 4 miles of existing fenceline would be limited to 2 days every 5 years for dropping off materials only. Fence maintenance as well as placement of salt block would be done by horseback.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon-juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 1,100 acres of accessible fuelwood would not be available. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed although the use of motorized vehicles for access would be prohibited. Approximately 30 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who walk to collection areas. These vegetation products are available in adjoining areas outside the WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

35,981 Acres Recommended for Wilderness
18,960 Acres Nonwilderness

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 35,981 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. Motorized recreation use would be prohibited within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness. The remaining 18,960 acres within the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion of the WSA would be under the guidance of the Benton-Owens Valley and the Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plans as well as the Inyo National Forest Land Use Plan, which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, motorized recreation access, and minerals management. Livestock grazing in the nonwilderness portion would increase by 36 AUMs to a total of 1,178

AUMs as a result of two prescribed burns totaling 550 acres. Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource as well as a 145-acre open-pit gold mine would occur in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. Motorized recreational use would continue in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Recreation Management Actions

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness. This would result in closure of 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes and eliminate approximately 800 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Use of this portion of the WSA for the Sierra Safari motorcycle poker run would not be permitted.

Within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA motorized recreation use would continue to be limited to 10 miles of existing roads and trails. Motorized recreation use would increase from the current 200 visitor days to an anticipated 400 visitor days. The Sierra Safari event would continue to utilize the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 35,981 acres would be closed to all forms of mineral entry and appropriation as a result of wilderness designation. Exploration or development for mineral resources would be prohibited.

The remaining 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. This portion of the WSA includes the area of moderate potential for occurrence and development of gold. Development of a 145-acre open-pit gold mine would occur as described under the Proposed Action. Areas of high potential for geothermal resources within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA would be available for exploration and development with the 50-Mw geothermal development anticipated as described under the Proposed Action. No other mineral/energy development is anticipated within the WSA.

Grazing Management Actions

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative the entire WSA would continue to be allotted for 2,855 AUMs with 1,713 AUMs occurring in the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness. The remaining portion of the WSA would support 1,142 AUMs. Three water developments in the southeast portion of the WSA would be within the designated wilderness and would be constructed and maintained as described in the Proposed Action. No vegetation manipulations would occur in the designated portion of the WSA therefore there would be no increase in AUMs.

Outside the portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness designation, the two pipelines in the southwest and three water developments in the west-central portion of the WSA would be constructed and maintained as described under the Proposed Action. Two prescribed burns (400 acres and 250 acres) in this portion of the WSA would occur over a 2-year period to increase forage production by 36 AUMs. The prescribed burns would each utilize

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA
CA-010-090
Partial Wilderness Alternative
MAP 19

WSA CA-010-092

R 28 E | R 29 E | R 30 E

R 27 E

T 3 N | T 2 N | T 1 N | T 1 S

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead
- Former BLM Lands now in Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area
- A — Area Recommended as Suitable
- B — Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

MONO LAKE

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

MONO BASIN

CONTRACK MOUNTAIN

Granite Mountain

Granite Basin

Granite Mtn

Indian Meadows

Adobe Creek

North Canyon

Dry Falls

Mono Mills (Site)

Simons Spring

Warm Springs

Indian Spring

Contrack Spring

Gaspipe Spring

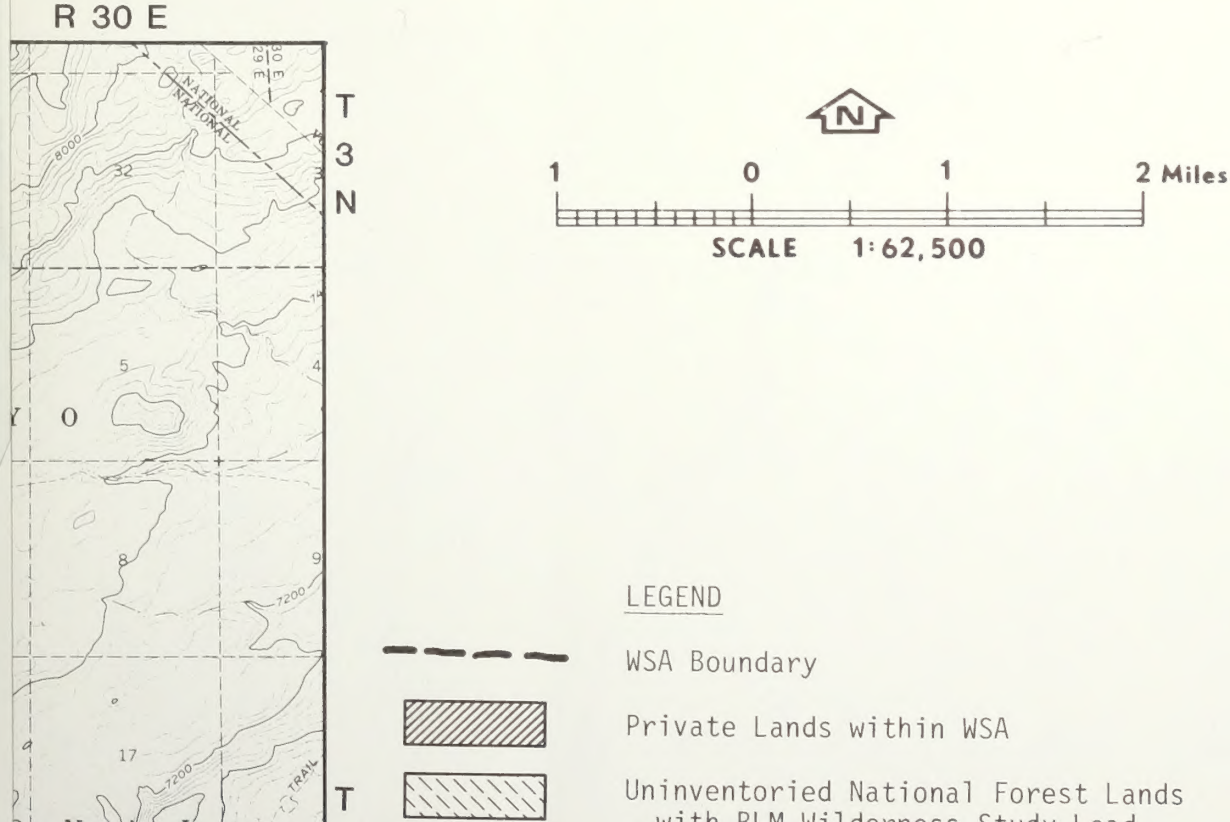
McPherson Grade

Deep Wells (Dry)

Adobe Ranch

INDEFINITE BOUNDARY

R 27 E | R 28 E | R 29 E | R 30 E | M.D.M.


R 30 E
T
3
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N
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0
1
2 Miles
SCALE 1:62,500
LEGEND
WSA Boundary
Private Lands within WSA
Uninventoried National Forest Lands
with BLM Wilderness Study Land

helitorch techniques requiring the use of a helicopter and four support vehicles including a fire truck, fuel truck, and two pickup trucks for 2 days. Support vehicles would primarily utilize existing vehicle routes with cross-country travel limited to emergency or fire control situations. A temporary staging area would require approximately one-quarter acre of surface brushing.

Sheepherding operations would continue to require 30 days of vehicle use throughout the WSA as described in the Proposed Action. Vehicle use for maintenance of the 4 miles of existing fenceline located in the portion of the WSA designated as wilderness would be limited to 2 days every 5 years for dropping of materials only. Fence maintenance as well as placement of salt blocks within the wilderness portion of the WSA would be done by horseback.

Within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, salt block placement would result in one day of vehicle use annually.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

The entire pinyon-juniper woodland zone lies within the designated wilderness portion of the WSA. Therefore management actions for fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting would be the same as those described under the All Wilderness Alternative.

TABLE 12
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE GRANITE MOUNTAIN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected development of an open-pit gold mine in the western portion of the WSA and anticipated geothermal development in the northwest portion of the WSA. The open-pit gold mine and the geothermal power facility would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 225 acres. The perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be impaired within 7,500 acres surrounding the mineral and energy developments. Livestock projects would impair the perception of naturalness on an additional 40 acres resulting in short-term minor to negligible impacts to solitude as a result of construction and maintenance. Prescribed burns and chemical treatments on 8,000 acres would result in short-term impacts to naturalness until vegetation is reestablished. Impacts from continued and projected motorized recreation use (1,100 visitor days) would be minor. There would be localized impacts on primitive and unconfined recreation as opportunities would be limited within the areas of mining activity and geothermal development. There would be slight impacts to special features as a result of continued motorized recreation use. There would be no perceptible impacts anticipated from other projected management actions.	Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by eliminating motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) as well as precluding mineral development and geothermal development. By prohibiting planned vegetative manipulations on 8,000 acres, short-term impacts to naturalness, as well as solitude, would not occur and the existing perception of naturalness would be retained. Proposed livestock projects including water developments and pipelines would impair the perception of naturalness on 40 acres and result in localized short-term minor to negligible impacts to solitude as a result of construction and maintenance. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and special features within the WSA would slightly benefit under wilderness designation.	There would be a slight positive benefit to wilderness values within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness. Elimination of 800 visitor days of motorized recreation use on 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes and precluding vegetative manipulations for increased livestock use (7,350 acres) would retain and enhance the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude. Special features and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would benefit from prohibiting motorized recreation use. Livestock water developments would impair the perception of naturalness on 15 acres and result in short-term minor to negligible impacts to solitude. Within the 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness the primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected development of an open-pit gold mine in the western portion of the WSA and anticipated geothermal development in the northwest portion of the WSA. Naturalness would be lost on 225 acres. The perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude would be impaired within 7,500 acres. Livestock projects including prescribed burns would result in short-term impacts to naturalness on 675 acres. Impacts from continued and increased motorized recreation use

Alternatives

TABLE 12 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE GRANITE MOUNTAIN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values (Continued)			(400 visitor days) would be minor. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be locally impacted due to mineral and geothermal development as well as continued motor vehicle use of 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes. There would only be negligible impacts on special features due to projected management actions and uses within the nondesignated portion of the WSA.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which is projected to increase from the current annual level of 1,000 visitor days to 1,100 visitor days.	Motorized recreation use totaling 1,000 visitor days per year within the 54,941-acre WSA would be foregone. Opportunities to shift this use to other nearby public lands are limited and may result in an overall slight loss of use within the general area. Impacts to the Sierra Safari would mostly necessitate rerouting of their course. Overall, there would be a moderate impact to motorized recreation use.	Overall, there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use as a result of designating 35,981 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA including approximately 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motorized recreation use with 800 visitor days of use foregone. The remaining 18,960 acres would continue to provide opportunities for motorized recreation use on approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The current use of 200 visitor days would be anticipated to increase to a total of 400 visitor days as a result of displaced use from the designated portion of the WSA. Within the entire WSA there would be a net loss of 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use.

TABLE 12 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE GRANITE MOUNTAIN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements	There would be no impact to livestock grazing and range improvements. All existing operations and proposed projects would be permitted, including 8,000 acres of vegetative manipulations to increase forage production by 569 AUMs to a total of 3,424 AUMs.	Under the All Wilderness Alternative, planned vegetative manipulations on 8,000 acres would be precluded and a projected increase of 569 AUMs would be foregone. Current livestock use (2,855 AUMs) would continue and all other projected improvements including six water developments and two water pipelines would be permitted. Overall, there would be a minor impact on livestock grazing and range improvements.	Overall, livestock use would increase by 36 AUMs to a total of 2,891 AUMs as a result of 650 acres of prescribed burns within the 18,960 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness. Vegetative manipulations (7,350 acres) within the 35,981 acres designated wilderness would be precluded and an increase of 533 AUMs would be foregone. Other planned livestock projects would continue throughout the WSA. There would be a minor impact on livestock grazing and range improvements.
Mineral Development	There would be no impact on mineral development. Exploration and development of a moderate potential for metallic minerals would potentially lead to the development of an open-pit gold mine in the western portion of the WSA.	Wilderness designation would result in closing the entire 54,941 acres to mineral entry. Exploration and development of potential mineral resources within the WSA would be foregone, including a potential deposit of disseminated gold in the western portion of the WSA. Development of a potential open-pit gold mine would be prohibited.	There would be no impact to mineral development. The 35,981 acres of the WSA designated wilderness are considered to have a zero to low potential for minerals. The remaining 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to all forms of mineral entry. Development of a potential open-pit gold mine would be within the nondesignated portion of the WSA.
Geothermal Development	There would be no impact on geothermal development under the Proposed Action. Exploration and development of geothermal resources would be permitted in the WSA. Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource is projected.	Geothermal resource development would be prohibited. Development of a potential 50-Mw geothermal resource would be foregone. Over the long term this would result in a minor impact.	There would be no impact on geothermal development under the Partial Wilderness Alternative. Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource is anticipated within the 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness. While exploration and development within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness would be prohibited, there

TABLE 12 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE GRANITE MOUNTAIN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Geothermal Development (Cont.)			is a low development potential although there is a moderate potential for geothermal resources. No development is anticipated therefore no geothermal resource production would be foregone.
Cultural Resources	Under the Proposed Action, cultural resources within the WSA would be vulnerable to impacts resulting from geothermal resource development, construction of a pipeline for livestock use, and continued motorized recreation use. Surface inventories prior to surface-disturbing activities, and an existing Cultural Resource Management Plan would limit potential impacts within areas of predicted high cultural resource sensitivity and to the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad. Mitigating measures would be established to either avoid cultural sites or salvage potential artifacts. Continued motorized vehicle use in the WSA would contribute to continued unauthorized collection of artifacts.	There would be slight positive benefits to cultural resources within the WSA due to precluding geothermal development and continued motorized recreation use. The historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade would potentially be negligibly impacted by development of a planned water pipeline for livestock use.	There would be a slight positive benefit to cultural resources within the 35,981 acres of the WSA designated as wilderness as a result of prohibition of motor vehicle use. Within the remaining 18,960 acres, cultural resources would be vulnerable to potential impacts. Surface inventories to determine the location of potential sites and develop appropriate mitigating measures if necessary as well as an existing Cultural Resources Management Plan would minimize potential impacts as a result of geothermal development and construction of a pipeline for livestock. Continued motorized recreation use within the nondesignated portion of the WSA would contribute to continued unauthorized collection of artifacts.

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
12,250 Acres Nonwilderness

The Proposed Action for Walford Springs WSA is not to designate any of the WSA as wilderness. The WSA will be managed in accordance with the BLM's existing Bodie-Coleville MFP. Livestock grazing will continue at existing levels. Motorized recreation use will be limited to existing primitive vehicle routes. Development of geothermal resources will occur.

Recreation Use Management Actions

Motorized recreation use will be permitted on 9 miles of existing primitive routes throughout the 12,250 acres of the WSA. Of the 600 visitor days of recreation use in the WSA, 550 visitor days are associated with motorized access. The Sierra Safari, a motorcycle poker run, accounts for 400 of these visitor days. Nonmotorized recreation use is estimated at no more than 50 visitor days. Except for the Sierra Safari, use is generally dispersed throughout the WSA. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned due to the low use and low demand. Visitor use is not anticipated to increase noticeably, if at all, in the foreseeable future.

Wildlife Management Actions

A plastic rain collection storage basin would be installed in the central portion of the WSA to benefit pronghorn antelope and nongame wildlife species. An area approximately 40 feet by 40 feet in size would be disturbed. Installation would occur over a 2-day period and require two vehicle trips. Yearly inspection and maintenance would require one vehicle trip.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource is projected for the western one-third of the WSA within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA. Exploration and development roads would total 12 miles. Approximately 70 acres of surface disturbance would occur with development including 14 production well pads, pipelines, and a small power plant.

No other mineral development is anticipated in the WSA since mineral potential for metallic and nonmetallic minerals is considered to be no better than low. There is no potential for oil and gas.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock grazing will continue at the present use level of 516 AUMs in the WSA. A water development with a windmill is proposed for the northern portion of the WSA within one-quarter mile of the boundary. Surface

R 28 E R 29 E M.D.M.

WSA CA-010-088

WSA CA-010-090

M O N O V A L L E Y

M O N O L A K E

T 3 N

T 2 N

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Former BLM Lands now in Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

WALFORD SPRINGS WSA

CA-010-092

Proposed Action
(No Wilderness/No Action)
MAP 20

disturbance would be approximately 100 square feet and the windmill would be 30 feet tall. Construction would occur over a 10-day period and would require 15 vehicle trips.

Inspection and maintenance of 7 miles of existing fence in the eastern portion of the WSA would occur approximately 14 days every 5 years and require 14 vehicle trips. Maintenance of the proposed windmill would result in three vehicle trips over 3 days each year. Placement of salt blocks would occur 1 day a year and require vehicle use.

Fuelwood Harvest Management Actions

Noncommercial fuelwood harvest of dead and down, or dead and standing juniper would be permitted on 500 acres of accessible juniper stands in the northeastern portion of the WSA. Based on the availability of deadwood and the low demand it is estimated that less than 20 cords would be harvested annually requiring less than 10 vehicle trips.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

12,250 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 12,250 acres in the Walford Springs WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Nine miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at the existing 516 AUMs. Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource is projected for the western third of the WSA.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire 12,250-acre WSA would be closed to motorized recreational use including 9 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The Sierra Safari motorcycle poker run would not be permitted in the WSA. Annual visitor use associated with motorized access would decrease by 550 days. Nonmotorized recreation use is estimated at less than 50 visitor days per year. Nonmotorized recreation use is not anticipated to increase beyond 50 days per year if at all. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are projected.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire 12,250-acre WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry upon wilderness designation. Development of moderate and high geothermal resource potential would not occur in the WSA. No mining

claims exist and none are projected since the mineral potential is considered to be better than low. There is no potential for oil and gas in the WSA. Therefore, no mineral exploration or development is anticipated in the WSA.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing Management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as described under the Proposed Action except that maintenance activities would become more restrictive. Annual inspection and maintenance of 7 miles of existing fence would require vehicle use 2 days to drop off materials to the project sites. Personnel who would repair or maintain the fence would ride into the area on horseback rather than use vehicles. Salt block placement would be accomplished on horseback rather than motor vehicle.

Fuelwood Harvest Management Actions

Noncommercial fuelwood harvest of dead and down, or dead and standing juniper would be prohibited throughout the WSA particularly the 500 acres of accessible juniper in the northeastern portion of the WSA.

CHART 13
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE WALFORD SPRINGS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation would be moderately impaired by the development of a 50-Mw geothermal facility. Naturalness would be lost on 70 acres, and the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be impaired within an area of 3,000 acres. Proposed wildlife and range improvement projects would have low impacts to localized naturalness and solitude. Continued 550 visitor days of motorized recreation use including the Sierra Safari motorcycle poker run would result in only slight impacts to wilderness values. Loss of 70 acres of pronghorn antelope habitat due to geothermal development would result in minor impacts.	The elimination of 550 visitor days of motorized recreation including the Sierra Safari and the foregone 50-Mw geothermal development would result in slight enhancement of the wilderness values. Proposed wildlife and range improvement projects would have negligible adverse impacts to localized naturalness and solitude. There would be a slight benefit to the area's pronghorn antelope habitat.
Motorized Recreation Use	Motorized recreation use is not anticipated to increase beyond the current level of 550 visitor days per year. The Sierra Safari motorcycle poker run would continue to utilize portions of the vehicle routes in the WSA. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use.	Motorized recreation use would be eliminated resulting in a loss of 550 visitor days per year. The Sierra Safari motorcycle poker run would not be permitted to use existing primitive vehicle routes within the WSA resulting in moderate impacts to the event. Opportunities to shift motorized use to other nearby public lands are limited and may result in a slight loss of use within the general area. Overall there would be a moderate adverse impact on motorized recreation use.

CHART 13 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE WALFORD SPRINGS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Geothermal Resource Development	Geothermal exploration and development could occur within the WSA. Development of a 50-Mw resource is projected. There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development.	Exploration and development of geothermal resources within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA including a projected 50-Mw resource would be foregone. Over the long term this would result in a minor impact.

MORMON MEADOWS WSA
(CA-010-094)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
7,280 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 7,280 acres of public land in the Mormon Meadows WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal, the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, riparian habitat, motorized recreational access, and minerals management. Livestock grazing use would continue to be allotted at 526 Animal Unit Months (AUMs). (See Map 21.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational activities would continue on existing routes and trails and in the north third of the WSA which would be designated as open. Approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by hunters, snowmobilers, and general sightseers resulting in 350 visitor days of vehicle use. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. Total yearly use is about 400 visitor days and is expected to remain stable in the long term. Use occurs in the unit throughout the year. No facilities exist and none are proposed due to the area's low and dispersed use.

Wildlife Management Actions

The ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan would be developed for the area to identify problems and to recommend corrective measures for aspen groves, meadows, springs, and stream riparian zones that are being impacted by grazing activities.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Approximately 30 mining claims are located along the WSA's northern boundary in an area considered to have high metallic mineral potential and moderate development potential. It is anticipated that there is moderate probability that gold exploration would occur and a small discovery made with a resulting open-pit mine totaling 210 acres of surface disturbance. Development of the mine would include a millsite, tailings and a waste rock area as well as 3 miles of roads. Metallic mineral potential is low in the remainder of the WSA. All other mineral potentials are low except for geothermal which is high. Geothermal development potential is moderate and a very small portion of the WSA's southeast corner has geothermal lease applications pending. It is anticipated that a 50-Mw geothermal resource would be discovered along the WSA's southeast boundary resulting in 92 acres of surface disturbance. Support facilities would include exploration drill pads, production and injection well pads, and a power plant with transmission lines. Additionally, 6 miles of exploration and development roads would be constructed.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 526 AUMs for sheep during June through September with the majority of use being in the northern half of the WSA. The herders would continue to use trucks and trailers 30 days per year while grazing sheep. Three spring developments are proposed and would be located in the northwest portion of the WSA. The spring developments would have a total surface disturbance of 75 square feet requiring a total of 15 days of vehicle use for construction. A total of 3 days of vehicle use every 3 years would be needed for inspection and maintenance. Only one existing spring development exists in the WSA and would be maintained from a boundary road.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Approximately 840 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is a very low demand for these vegetative products. Approximately 40 cords per year of fuelwood would be available resulting in 20 vehicle trips per year. Casual use of pinyon nut collecting would result in 15 vehicle trips (38 visitor days) per year. Fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection use is expected to remain unchanged over the long term.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

7,280 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

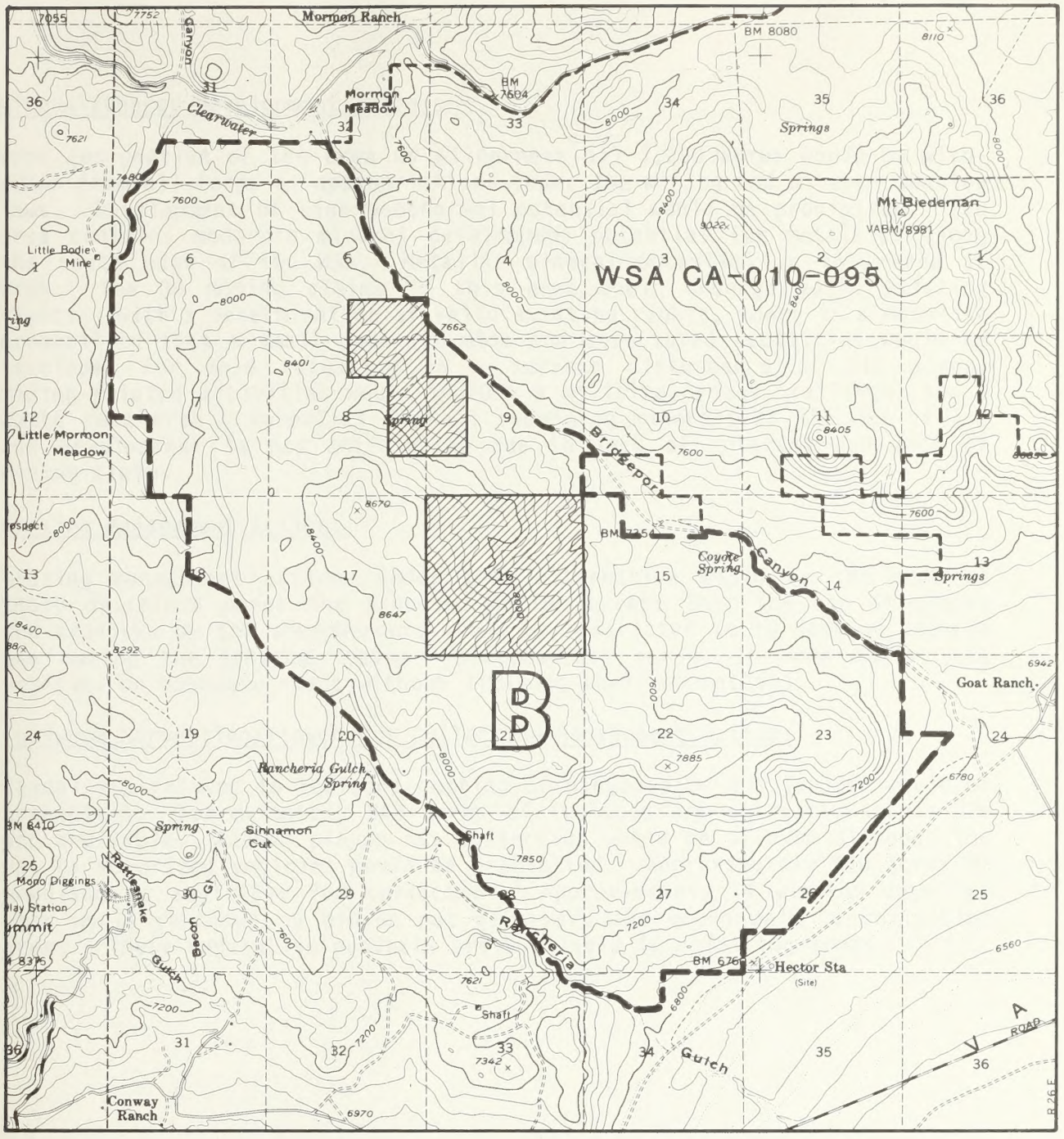
All 7,280 acres in the Mormon Meadows WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 526 AUMs.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 350 visitor use days related to motorized recreational use annually. Approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Fifty visitor days per year related to nonmotorized recreational access would increase to a total of 100 visitor days in the long term as a result of continued hunting without the use of motorized vehicles. Under this alternative, the WSA would be managed to provide a primitive setting to allow nonmotorized recreational pursuits such as hiking and primitive camping. No recreational facilities exist and none are planned due to the area's low use.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions under this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.



N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

MORMON MEADOWS WSA

CA-010-094

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 21

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the area as wilderness all 7,280 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. Development of high geothermal potential would be prohibited. The area contains moderate mineral development potential for metallics along the north edge of the WSA. Metallic mineral potential in this area is high. The 30 mining claims in this area would undergo valid existing rights. With a determination of valid existing rights, there is a moderate probability that a small open-pit mine and associated facilities would be developed for gold resulting in a surface disturbance of 210 acres. Mining-related activities would include a millsite, roads, tailings, and a waste rock area. Potential for all remaining minerals in the WSA is low and development is not anticipated due to lack of interest and lack of mining claims.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions under this alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action except that the use of trucks and trailers by the sheepherders would be restricted to 10 days of vehicle use during the grazing season. Sheepherders could, in some cases, use vehicles on boundary roads without limiting their operations.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon pine and juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 840 acres of fuelwood are currently accessible and available. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed although the use of motorized vehicles would be prohibited. Approximately 840 acres of woodland is available for collection. Approximately 14 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas. These vegetative products are available in adjoining areas.

TABLE 14
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE MORMON MEADOWS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Mining activities and geothermal development would result in a direct loss of naturalness, solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation on 302 acres. The perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired on an additional 500 acres due to mining and geothermal activities. Continued motorized recreation use (350 visitor days) would impact naturalness on 10 acres. Critical sage grouse habitat would be eliminated due to mining activities. *Phacelia monoensis* could potentially be impacted by mining activities.	Overall there would be a slight to moderate enhancement of wilderness values primarily due to the prohibition of geothermal development and elimination of 350 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Due to the probability of valid existing rights, mining activities would impact wilderness values as described under the Proposed Action including a loss of naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation on 210 acres. The perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired on an additional 400 acres by mining activities.
Motorized Recreation Use	Motorized recreation use is expected to remain stable at 350 visitor days per year. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use.	Motorized recreation use would be eliminated resulting in a loss of 350 visitor days per year. This would be a slight adverse impact due to opportunities on public land outside the WSA.
Geothermal Resource Development	Geothermal exploration and development could occur within the WSA. Development of a 50-Mw resource is projected. There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development.	Exploration and development of geothermal resources including a projected 50-Mw resource would be foregone. Over the long term this would result in a less than minor impact.

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA
(CA-010-095)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
12,420 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 12,420 acres of public land in the Mt. Biedeman WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal, the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, historical and scenic values, cultural resources and minerals management. Livestock grazing use would be allotted at 1,183 Animal Unit Months (AUMs). (See Map 22.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational activities would continue on existing routes and trails and in the northwest third of the WSA which would be designated as open. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. Approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by hunters, sightseers, etc. Total yearly use is approximately 475 visitor days with 450 of these days related to vehicle use. Use is expected to remain stable over the long term. In addition, over 72,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Park view the WSA's expansive landscape along the north boundary and view the narrow confines of Cottonwood Canyon along the eastern boundary. This use along the WSA boundary is expected to increase to a level of 100,000 to 125,000 visitor days per year.

No recreation facilities currently exist in the WSA. The Bodie State Park Management Plan prescribes the construction of facilities in the Bodie Bowl portion (WSA's northeast corner) of the unit. These facilities would disturb 5 acres of surface area, and include an interpretive center, a 40-car parking lot, two residences, a dormitory, a park office, and 1 mile of new road.

Wildlife Management Actions

The ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan would be developed to identify areas and to recommend corrective measures for wetland habitats that are being adversely impacted by grazing use. In particular, the Cottonwood Canyon and Murphy Springs drainages would be studied.

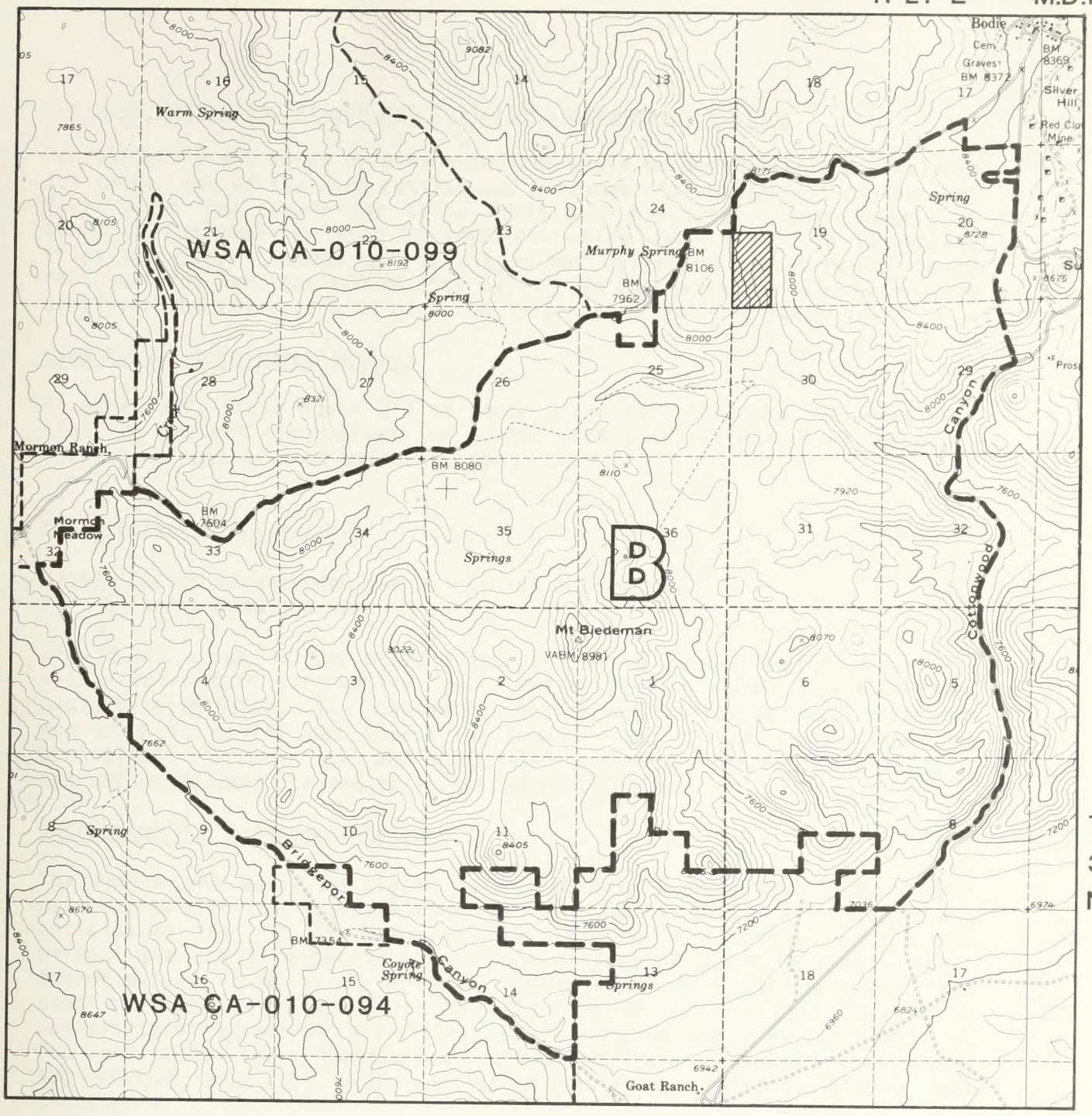
Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Approximately 30 mining claims are in the WSA, with 20 of these located in the northeast portion of the WSA which is considered to have high metallic mineral potential as well as high development potential. The Mormon Meadow area has a moderate development potential for metallic minerals (8 mining claims). It is anticipated, that there would be a large discovery of silver or gold in the northeast portion of

the WSA. An open-pit mine and associated facilities would be developed resulting in 420 acres of surface disturbance in addition to 8 miles of associated roads. Facilities associated with the mine would include a millsite, leach fields, tailings, and a waste rock disposal area. There is a moderate probability that additional gold exploration and a small discovery would occur in the Mormon Meadow area. It is anticipated that an open-pit mine and associated facilities would be developed resulting in 210 acres of surface disturbance. Associated facilities include a millsite, roads, tailings, and a waste rock area. Metallic mineral potential and development for the remainder of the WSA is low due to lack of claims and interest. All other mineral potentials and development potentials are low except for geothermal which is considered to have moderate to high geothermal potential with low to moderate development potential due to a lack of industry activity and a lack of strong surface indications of a viable geothermal resource. Pending geothermal lease applications exist along small portions of the WSA's northern boundary. In the event geothermal development were to occur, it is anticipated that a small geothermal resource would be found in the southwest corner of the WSA. A 10-Mw plant would be constructed with exploration and development roads, exploration and production well pads, pipelines, and injection wells. Approximately 60 acres of surface disturbance would result from this development.

Grazing Management Actions

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 1,183 AUMs for cattle and sheep grazing during June through October throughout the entire WSA. Cattle use only the northeast corner of the WSA and salt block placement is done by truck 1 day per year. The sheepherders would continue to use trucks, trailers, and water trucks on a frequent basis amounting to 60 days per year during the grazing season. Proposed projects include two pipelines totaling 2 miles (north portion of WSA), four reservoirs scattered throughout the WSA, a 200-foot fence in Cottonwood Canyon, and a windmill to be located south of Mt. Biedeman. Total motorized access for construction of these projects would be 20 days for the pipeline, 8 days for the reservoirs, 15 vehicle days for the windmill, and the fence would be built and maintained from the existing Cottonwood Canyon boundary road. Inspection and maintenance for these projects would entail 4 days of vehicle use per year for the pipelines, 8 days of vehicle use every 10 years for the reservoirs, 3 days of vehicle use per year for the windmill. The pipelines would be buried causing a 3-foot-wide surface disturbance which would be rehabilitated and the reservoirs would have a total surface disturbance of 1 acre. The windmill would occupy a surface area of 160 square feet and would be 30 feet high and have an associated 8' x 8' diameter storage tank. Some shrubs would be removed for the proposed fence project (200 feet). The existing facilities within the WSA are a 4-mile fence located along the eastern boundary, and two reservoirs near the center of the north boundary. Inspection and maintenance for the fence would require 8 days of vehicle use every 5 years and the reservoirs would require a total of 4 days of vehicle use every 10 years.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

B Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA

CA-010-095

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 22

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Approximately 450 acres of pinyon-juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is a low demand for these vegetative products. Approximately 20 cords of fuelwood per year is available which would result in 10 vehicle trips per year. Casual use of pinyon nut collecting would result in 10 vehicle trips per year (25 visitor days). No change in fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting is expected to occur in the long term.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

If necessary, State Route 270 to Bodie State Park would be realigned outside the present right-of-way up to 200 feet into the WSA under emergency conditions such as road washouts, etc.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

12,420 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 12,420 acres in the Mt. Biedeman WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreation access and activities would be eliminated. Ten miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 1,183 AUMs.

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 450 visitor days related to motorized vehicle access. It is anticipated that 75 of these visitor days would continue in this WSA without the use of motor vehicles. These types of users include hunters. Approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. The 25 visitor days related to nonmotorized recreation activities such as hiking would remain stable in the long term. Thus, nonmotorized recreational use in the WSA would total 100 visitor days per year--consisting mostly of hunters, hikers, and sightseers.

In addition, over 72,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would continue to view the WSA's expansive landscape along the north boundary and view the narrow confines of Cottonwood Canyon along the eastern boundary. Use along these two WSA boundary roads is expected to increase to a level of 100,000 to 125,000 visitor days per year.

Administrative facilities prescribed in the Bodie State Historic Park Management Plan would be prohibited under this alternative. Due to existing land ownership and physical geography, there are few opportunities at less desirable locations to construct these facilities.

Wildlife Management Actions

The wildlife management actions under this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the WSA as wilderness, all 12,420 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining and mineral leasing laws. Development of the area's moderate to high geothermal potential would be prohibited. Upon determination of valid existing rights of 20 mining claims in the northeast portion of the unit (high probability), it is anticipated that an open-pit mine related to gold or silver would be developed resulting in 420 acres of surface disturbance in addition to 8 miles of associated roads. Facilities associated with the mine would include a millsite, leach fields, tailings, and a waste rock disposal area. There is a moderate probability that additional gold exploration and a small discovery would be developed resulting in 210 acres of surface disturbance. Associated facilities would include a millsite, roads, tailings, and a waste rock area. Potential for all remaining minerals is low and no development is anticipated.

Grazing Management Actions

Under this alternative, sheep and cattle grazing would continue to be allotted at 1,183 AUMs throughout the WSA. Sheepherders would continue to use trucks, trailers, and water trucks in the designated area but would be restricted to 30 days of vehicular use during June through October. Cattle operators would have to place salt blocks by horseback. Proposed projects and their construction, inspection, and maintenance would be the same as for the Proposed Action. Inspection and maintenance requirements of the existing projects would be the same as for the Proposed Action except that vehicle use for the fence would be 2 days every 5 years for dropping off materials only. Fence repair would be done by horseback.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon-juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 450 acres of accessible fuelwood would not be available. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed although the use of motorized vehicles would be prohibited. Approximately 450 acres of woodland is available for collecting. Approximately 13 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who walk to collection areas. These vegetative products are available in adjoining areas outside the WSA.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

In order to maintain the biological integrity of the Murphy Springs drainage as well as to prevent any unforeseen offsite impacts in the future, 80 acres of nonpublic land (T. 4 E., R. 27 E., Sec. 19) would be acquired.

Any emergency realignment of State Route 270 outside the existing right-of-way would be prohibited along 4¼ miles of the route that adjoins the WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,300 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
3,120 Acres Nonwilderness

This Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 9,300 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, historical and scenic values, wildlife, riparian habitat, motorized recreational access, and minerals.

Recreation Use Management Actions

Approximately 76% of the WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use. Approximately 9 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Approximately 450 visitor use days would be eliminated that are related to motor vehicle use. Many of these visitors would shift their activities to and continue using the nondesignated portion of the unit, although about 75 visitors would continue to use the designated area by primitive means such as foot travel. Long-term use in the designated portion would total about 100 visitor use days per year. This includes present nonmotorized recreation users such as hikers as well as recreationists who formerly used the area with motorized vehicles and have shifted their use to a primitive means of travel.

Visitor use in the nondesignated portion totals 75 visitor use days per year with 25 of the visitor days attributed to hiking. The remainder is attributed to recreationists such as snowmobilers, hunters, general sightseers, etc. In the long term, visitor use would slowly increase in this area to about 150 visitor days per year as a result of the adjoining area's closure to motorized vehicles.

In addition, administrative facilities would be constructed in the nondesignated portion for Bodie State Historic Park. The facilities would be located in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA (northeast portion) and would disturb 5 acres of surface area. Proposed facilities include an interpretive center, a 40-car parking lot, two residences, a park office, and 1 mile of new road.

Wildlife Management Actions

For both the designated and nondesignated areas, the wildlife management actions under this alternative are the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

A portion of the WSA encompassing 9,300 acres would be withdrawn from mineral entry. Geothermal mineral development would be prohibited in this area. Approximately nine mining claims are in the designated portion of the unit. Eight of these claims are located in an area of high metallic mineral potential. Based upon determination of valid existing rights

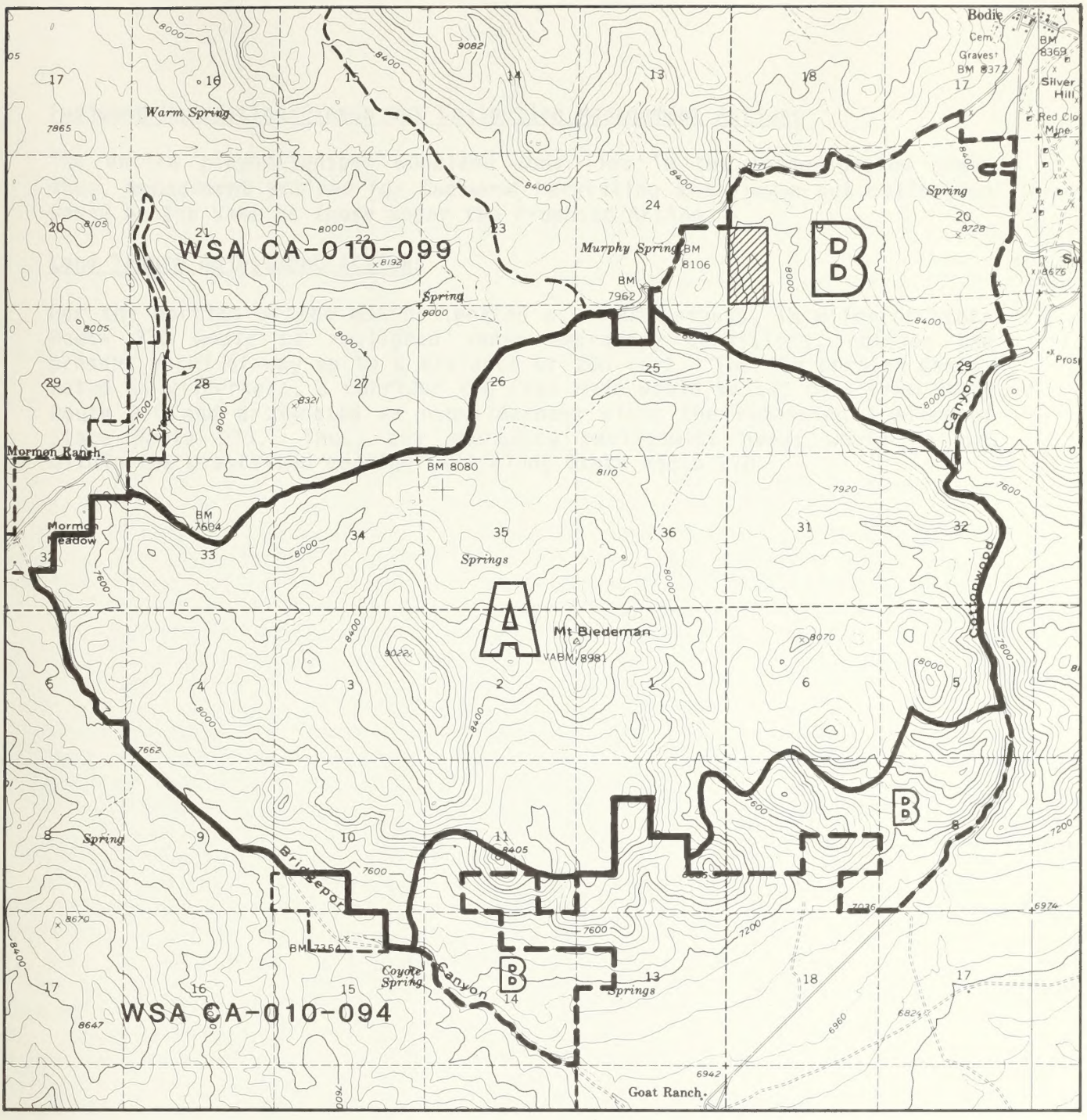
which is considered moderate, it is anticipated that gold exploration and a discovery would be made in the Mormon Meadows area. Associated surface disturbances and facilities are described in the All Wilderness Alternative. All other mineral potentials and development potential are the same as those described under the All Wilderness Alternative.

The 3,120 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to mineral entry. Approximately 21 mining claims are located in the nondesignated area; 20 of these claims are in the northeast portion of the WSA which has a high probability for determination of valid existing rights. As a result, it is anticipated that there would be a large discovery of silver or gold in the northeast portion of the WSA. Associated facilities and surface disturbances are described in the Proposed Action. All other mineral potentials and development potentials are low except for geothermal which is considered to have moderate to high geothermal potential with low to moderate development potential due to a lack of industry activity and lack of strong surface indications of a viable geothermal resource. In the event geothermal development were to occur, a 10-Mw geothermal resource would result in 60 acres of surface disturbance as described under the Proposed Action.

Grazing Management Actions

Within the designated portion of the WSA, sheep use would be allotted at 909 AUMs and sheepherders' vehicle use would be restricted as set forth in the All Wilderness Alternative. The proposed facilities would be a 1-mile pipeline, three reservoirs, a windmill south of Mt. Biedeman, and 200 feet of drift fence. The pipeline and one reservoir would be located near the northern boundary, one reservoir and the 200-foot fence would be near the east boundary and the other reservoir would be near the south side. The pipeline would be buried resulting in a surface disturbance 3 feet wide. This disturbance would be rehabilitated within 1 to 2 years. Total disturbance for the reservoirs would be .75 acre and some shrubs would be removed for the fence. Total motorized access for construction of these projects would be 10 days of vehicle use using a backhoe and truck, 6 days of bulldozer work, 15 days for the windmill, and the fence would be built from a boundary road. Inspection and maintenance for these projects would amount to 2 days each year of truck use for the pipeline, and a total of 6 days every 10 years of bulldozer work. The fence would be maintained on foot. The existing projects and their inspection and maintenance requirements are the same as the Proposed Action except that the fence data is slightly changed. Only 2 miles of the existing fence would be affected, and the maintenance would be done from the Cottonwood Canyon Road.

Within the nonwilderness area, cattle and sheep use would continue to be allotted at 274 AUMs. Motorized access for sheepherders would be unnecessary since most grazing use would be by cattle. One day of truck use would be needed for salt block placement. The proposed 1-mile pipeline in the WSA's northeast corner, and the reservoir in the southeast corner would be built. Management actions for the pipeline would be the same as the designated area. The reservoir would disturb one-quarter acre and would require 2 vehicle days of bulldozer work with a truck. Maintenance would amount to 2 days every 10 years of bulldozer work. The existing 2-mile fence would require 4 vehicle days every 5 years using a truck.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Suitable

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA

CA-010-095

Partial Wilderness Alternative

MAP 23

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

The entire pinyon-juniper woodland zone lies in the nondesignated area. Thus, management actions for fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

For the portion of the WSA designated as nonwilderness, 1¼ miles of State Route 270 would be realigned under emergency conditions, outside the present right-of-way up to a distance of 200 feet. For the portion designated as wilderness, a corridor 200 feet wide would be set back from State Route 270 and designated as nonwilderness along the remaining 3 miles of State Route 270. Thus, any emergency realignment needs would be met within the prescribed corridor all along State Route 270.

TABLE 15
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE MT. BIEDEMAN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Two open-pit mining operations and geothermal development would directly impact naturalness, solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation on 690 acres and impair the perception of naturalness and solitude over an additional 950 acres. Livestock improvement projects would only slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis on less than 5 acres. Special features including crucial sage grouse habitat and sensitive plant (Phacelia monoensis) habitat could be moderately impacted from mining activities or development of administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park.	Wilderness designation of the entire WSA would result in a slight to moderate enhancement of long-term protection of wilderness values due to prohibition of geothermal development, elimination of 450 visitor days of motorized recreation use, the development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park, and the prohibition of emergency realignment of State Route 270 into the WSA. It is anticipated that a determination of valid existing rights would allow development of the two open-pit mines resulting in the same impacts described under the Proposed Action. Livestock improvement projects and grazing would be the same as in the Proposed Action except that vehicle use would be limited resulting in slight beneficial effects.	Wilderness designation of 9,300 acres would result in low positive benefits to the area's wilderness values due to the elimination of 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use and the reduction of motor vehicle use for livestock grazing activities. A determination of valid existing rights would lead to the development of a 210-acre open-pit mine and locally impact naturalness, solitude, primitive recreation as well as sensitive plant (Phacelia monoensis) habitat and crucial sage grouse habitat. The perception of naturalness would be impaired on an additional 350 acres. Livestock improvement projects within the designated portion would only slightly impact naturalness and solitude on a localized basis. Within the 3,120 acres not designated wilderness, mining and geothermal development would directly impact wilderness values on 480 acres and impair naturalness and solitude over an additional 600 acres. An increase of 100 visitor days of motorized recreation use would result in only minor impacts to naturalness and solitude. Development of administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park would moderately impact crucial sage grouse habitat.

TABLE 15 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE MT. BIEDEMAN WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impact on motorized recreation use in the WSA. Use would continue and remain stable at 450 visitor days.	Elimination of motorized recreation use in the WSA would result in a loss of 450 visitor days. This would only be a minor impact due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA.	Closure of 9,300 acres of the WSA to motorized recreation use would result in a loss of 400 visitor days. This would result in only a minor impact due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA and an increase of 100 visitor days within the 3,120 acres not designated wilderness.
Recreational Facilities Development	There would be no impact. Administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park could be developed within the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA.	Administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park could not be developed within the WSA. There would be adverse impacts due to limited opportunities outside the WSA.	There would be no impact. Administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park could be developed within the Bodie Bowl in the nondesignated portion of the WSA.
Geothermal Resource Development	There would be no impacts. The entire WSA would be open for geothermal development including a potential 10-Mw resource.	Wilderness designation would preclude exploration and development of geothermal resources including a 10-Mw resource within the WSA. This would result in less than a minor impact.	Geothermal exploration and development would be precluded on 9,300 acres designated wilderness. However, this would result in a negligible impact due to only a moderate potential for geothermal resources with a low development potential. There would be no impact on geothermal development within the remaining 3,120 acres. Development of a 10-Mw resource is anticipated.
State Route 270 Realignment	There would be no impacts. Realignment of State Route 270 could occur within the WSA.	Realignment of State Route 270 could not occur within the WSA resulting in a moderate adverse impact.	There would be no impact. The partial wilderness boundary would establish a 200-foot-wide corridor for realignment of State Route 270.
Sage Grouse Strutting Grounds and Nesting Habitat	There would be a moderate impact as a result of the loss of two separate crucial habitat areas due to mining and the development of administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park.	There would be a moderate impact as a result of loss of crucial habitat area due to mining activities. Crucial habitat in the Bodie Bowl would be preserved as a result of prohibiting development of facilities for Bodie State Historic Park.	There would be a moderate impact as a result of the loss of the two separate crucial habitat areas described under the Proposed Action.

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA
(CA-010-099)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
23,360 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 23,360 acres of public land in the Bodie Mountains WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal, the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, riparian habitat, motorized recreational access, and minerals management. Livestock grazing use would be increased from 2,270 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) to 2,300 AUMs as a result of a proposed vegetative treatment. (See Map 24.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreation activities would continue on existing routes and trails and in some instances throughout the WSA which would be designated as open to vehicle use. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. Approximately 16 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual poker rally, snowmobilers, hunters, and general sightseers. Total yearly use is approximately 950 visitor use days. Approximately 900 of these visitor days are related to motor vehicle use. Use is expected to remain stable over the long term. In addition, over 72,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park view the WSA's expansive landscape along the southern boundary. This use along the WSA boundary road is expected to increase to 100,000 to 125,000 visitor days per year. No recreation facilities exist and none are proposed.

Wildlife Management Actions

Restoration of the Clark Canyon drainage would continue. Six erosion control gabions and 400 feet of fence are proposed to restore the meadow area. Each gabion would measure 35 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 5 feet high. Vehicles would be used 5 days for each gabion, totaling 30 days. Fence installation would be done during gabion construction. Inspection and maintenance would require the use of a vehicle 6 days every 3 years for all proposed gabions and 2 days every year for fences.

Rehabilitation of three springs and one meadow in the south half of the WSA would require three fence exclosures totaling one-half mile and three erosion control gabions (each measuring 35 feet long, 5 feet high, and 4 feet wide). Vehicles would be used during construction which would entail 15 days of construction time for all fences and 15 days of construction time for all gabions. Inspection and maintenance, if needed, would require 3 days of vehicle use every 3 years for all gabions and 3 days of vehicle use per year for all fences.

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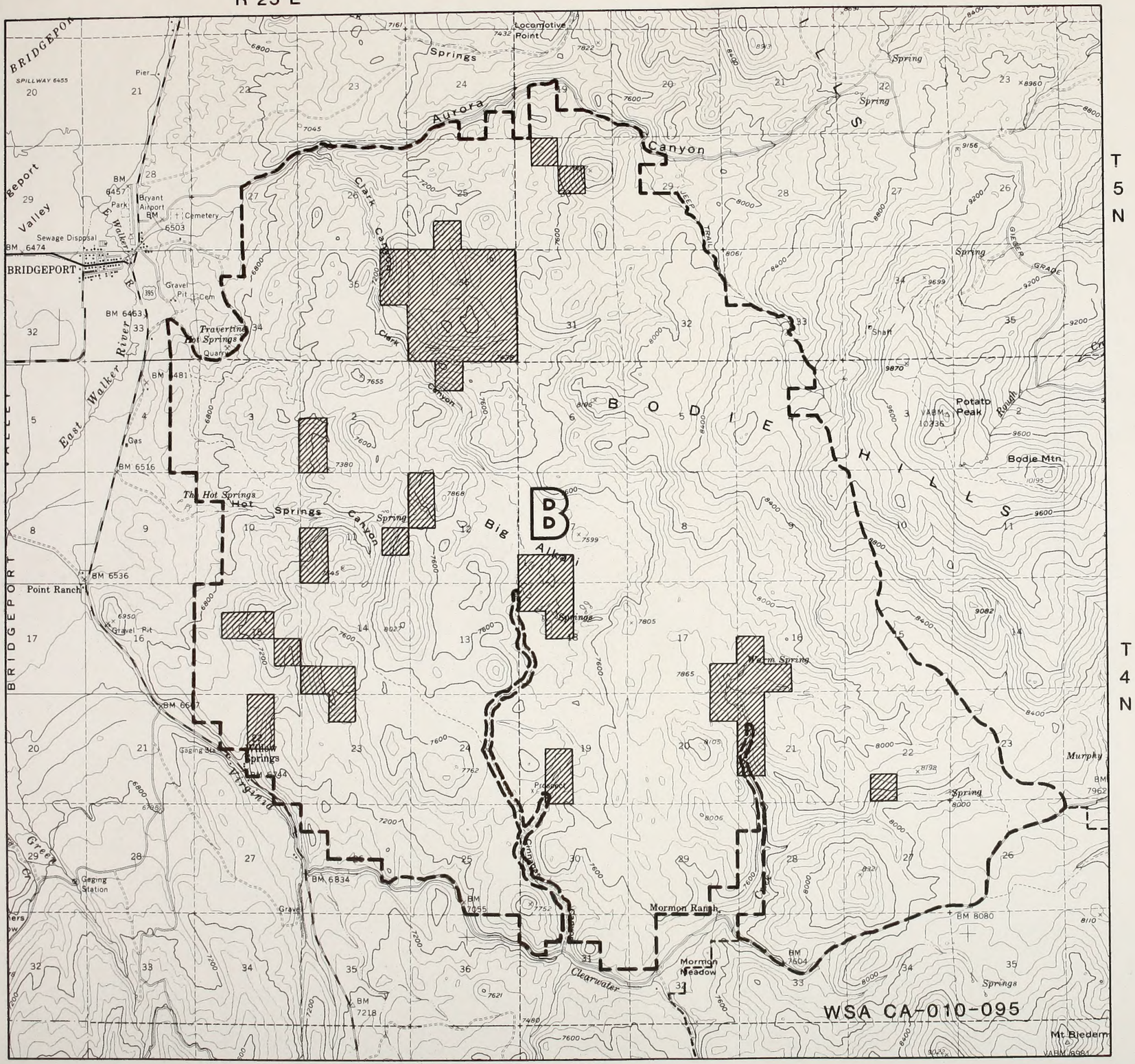

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1 0 1 2 Miles

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LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

B Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA

CA-010-099

Proposed Action

(No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 24

A 75-acre vegetative treatment (probably a prescribed burn) is proposed in Hot Springs Canyon to improve wildlife habitat and to increase livestock forage. If a burn, the prescription would require 1 day for burning and 1 day for mop up operations. Several trucks, a water tender, and two fire trucks would be used for 2 days. It is estimated that the burn would result in an additional 30 AUMs for cattle.

Six erosion control gabions and 200 feet of fence currently exist in Clark Canyon which would require 6 days of vehicle use every 3 years for inspection and maintenance of the gabions. The fence would require 1 day per year of vehicle use for maintenance.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would remain open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Approximately 348 unpatented mining claims have been located in the WSA, 50% of which occur in the Cinnabar Canyon area which has a high potential for metallic mineral occurrence as well as a high development potential. The Hot Springs Canyon area has a moderate potential for metallic minerals. Due to the fact that a company is considering going to patent in the Cinnabar Canyon area, the possibility exists that a sulphur discovery would be made there. Assuming this is the case, an open-pit mine and associated facilities would be developed resulting in 420 acres of disturbance and 8 miles of roads. Nearly all of the WSA has high potential for geothermal resources with a moderate development potential. As a result of these potentials, the discovery and development of a low temperature geothermal (10-Mw) resource resulting in 40 acres of disturbance along with 5 miles of roads is anticipated in the west quarter of the WSA, probably in the vicinity of Travertine Hot Springs. Much of the WSA is covered by geothermal lease applications which could be sold when WSA status is lifted. There is no known potential for thorium, oil and gas, sodium, or potassium within the WSA.

Grazing Management Actions

Under the Proposed Action, the area would continue to be allotted 2,270 AUMs for cattle and sheep use throughout the entire WSA during June through October. Sheepherders would continue to use trucks, trailers, and water trucks while grazing amounting to 40 days of vehicle use. Cattle operators would continue to use trucks for salt block placement totaling 3 vehicle days. Proposed projects include: three pipelines totaling 1¼ miles located in Hot Springs Canyon, Big Alkali, and an unnamed spring in the southeast portion of the unit, would have a total surface disturbance of 3 feet wide after burying; three spring developments located in the WSA's northeast corner and Cinnabar Canyon and having a total surface disturbance of 75 square feet; three reservoirs located in the WSA's northeast corner, Hot Springs Canyon, and Big Alkali for a total surface disturbance of three-quarter acre; two fences totaling 6 miles located at Travertine Hot Springs and east of Mormon Meadow and having a surface disturbance amounting to some shrub removal; and two primitive vehicle route improvements totaling 3 miles and located in the WSA's south half. Buried pipelines would be rehabilitated within 1 to 2 years. Construction of these projects

would require 3 days of vehicle use for the pipelines, 15 days of vehicle use for the spring developments, 6 days of vehicle use for the reservoirs, 30 days of vehicle use for the fences, 3 days of vehicle use for the prescribed burn, and 5 days of vehicle use for the route improvements.

Inspection and maintenance for these projects would require vehicle access in the amounts of 6 days of vehicle use per year for the pipelines, 6 days of vehicle use per year for the spring developments, 6 days of vehicle use every 10 years for the reservoirs, 12 days every 5 years for the fences, and 5 days every 10 years for primitive route improvements.

Existing projects consist of six fences totaling 12 miles scattered throughout the WSA, a 400-foot pipeline located in Cinnabar Canyon, an exclosure at an unnamed spring in the southeast corner of the unit, and two reservoirs in the southeast corner. Inspection and maintenance would require 2 days of vehicle use per year for the pipeline, 24 days every 5 years for the fences, 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years for the exclosure, and 4 days of vehicle use every 10 years for the reservoirs.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Approximately 1,620 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of firewood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is low demand for these vegetative products. Approximately 70 cords of fuelwood per year is available which would result in 35 vehicle trips per year. Casual use of pinyon nut collecting would result in 15 vehicle trips per year (40 visitor days per year). No change in fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting is expected to occur in the long term.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

If necessary, State Route 270 to Bodie State Historic Park would be realigned outside the established right-of-way into the WSA up to an anticipated distance of 200 feet under emergency conditions such as road washouts, etc.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

23,360 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 23,360 acres in the Bodie Mountains WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Sixteen miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Emergency realignment needs for State Route 270 would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 2,270 Animal Unit Months (AUMs).

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 900 visitor days related to motorized vehicle access. it is anticipated that 75 of these visitor days would continue in the designated area without the use of motor vehicles. These users would include primarily hunters. Approximately 16 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. The Modesto Ridgerunners' annual poker rally and winter snowmobiling use would be relocated to other areas. Few additional areas are available for these activities. The 50 visitor days related to nonmotorized recreation activities such as hiking would remain stable in the long term. Thus, nonmotorized recreational use in the designated area would total 125 visitor days per year--consisting mostly of hunters and hikers. In addition, over 72,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the WSA's expansive landscape along the southern boundary. This use along the WSA boundary road is expected to increase to 100,000 to 125,000 visitor days per year. No recreation facilities exist and none are proposed.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action except for the following: 1) The 75-acre vegetative treatment, (probably a prescribed burn) in Hot Springs Canyon would be prohibited, and 2) motor vehicles for inspection and maintenance of the proposed and existing fences would be used 2 days per year to drop materials off at the project site. Actual fence maintenance would be conducted by personnel who ride to the area on horseback.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the WSA as Wilderness, all 23,360 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining, mineral sale and leasing laws subject to valid existing rights. Approximately 348 unpatented mining claims would be restricted from exploration and development pending valid existing rights determination. The potential for valid existing rights is high in the Cinnabar Canyon area and the development potential is also high. It is, therefore, possible that an open-pit sulphur mine would be developed within the south-central portion of the WSA. This would result in the development of an open-pit mine, millsite, tailings, and waste rock disposal areas totaling 420 acres along with 8 miles of roads. Geothermal lease applications covering a large portion of the WSA would be denied. Exploration leasing and development would be prohibited within the WSA which is 90% high potential for geothermal resources, the remaining 10% is moderate potential with development potential considered moderate. The potential for occurrence is low for all remaining minerals and no development is anticipated.

Grazing Management Actions

Under this alternative, the area would continue to be allotted for 2,270 AUMs of cattle and sheep use throughout the WSA. Salt block placement would be done by horseback. Sheepherders would continue to use trucks,

trailers, and water trucks while grazing the area, but in order to reduce unnecessary vehicle traffic, use would be lowered to 20 days of vehicle use every year from June to October. The proposed project locations, construction, inspection and maintenance would be the same as the Proposed Action except for fences. The proposed fences would require 3 days of vehicle use every 5 years and 3 days of vehicle use every 5 years for the existing fences in order to drop off materials. Fence repair would be done by horseback. The proposed 3-mile primitive route improvement would be prohibited.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon pine and juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 1,620 acres of fuelwood are currently accessible and available. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed, although the use of motorized vehicles would be prohibited. Approximately 1,620 acres of woodland is available for collecting. Approximately 19 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who walk to collection areas. These vegetative products are available in adjoining areas.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

Any emergency realignment of State Route 270 outside the existing right-of-way would be prohibited along 4 3/4 miles of the route that adjoins the WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,790 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
13,570 Acres Nonwilderness

This Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 9,790 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, riparian habitat, motorized recreational access, and minerals management.

Recreation Use Management Actions

Approximately 42% of the WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use. Approximately 3 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Approximately 400 visitor use days would be eliminated that are related to motor vehicle use. Many of these visitors would shift their activities to and continue using the nondesignated portion, although about 200 visitors, particularly hunters, would continue to use the designated area by primitive means such as foot travel. Long-term use in the designated portion would total about 250 visitor use days per year. This includes present nonmotorized recreation users such as hikers as well as recreationists who formerly used the area with motorized vehicles and have shifted their use to a primitive means of travel.

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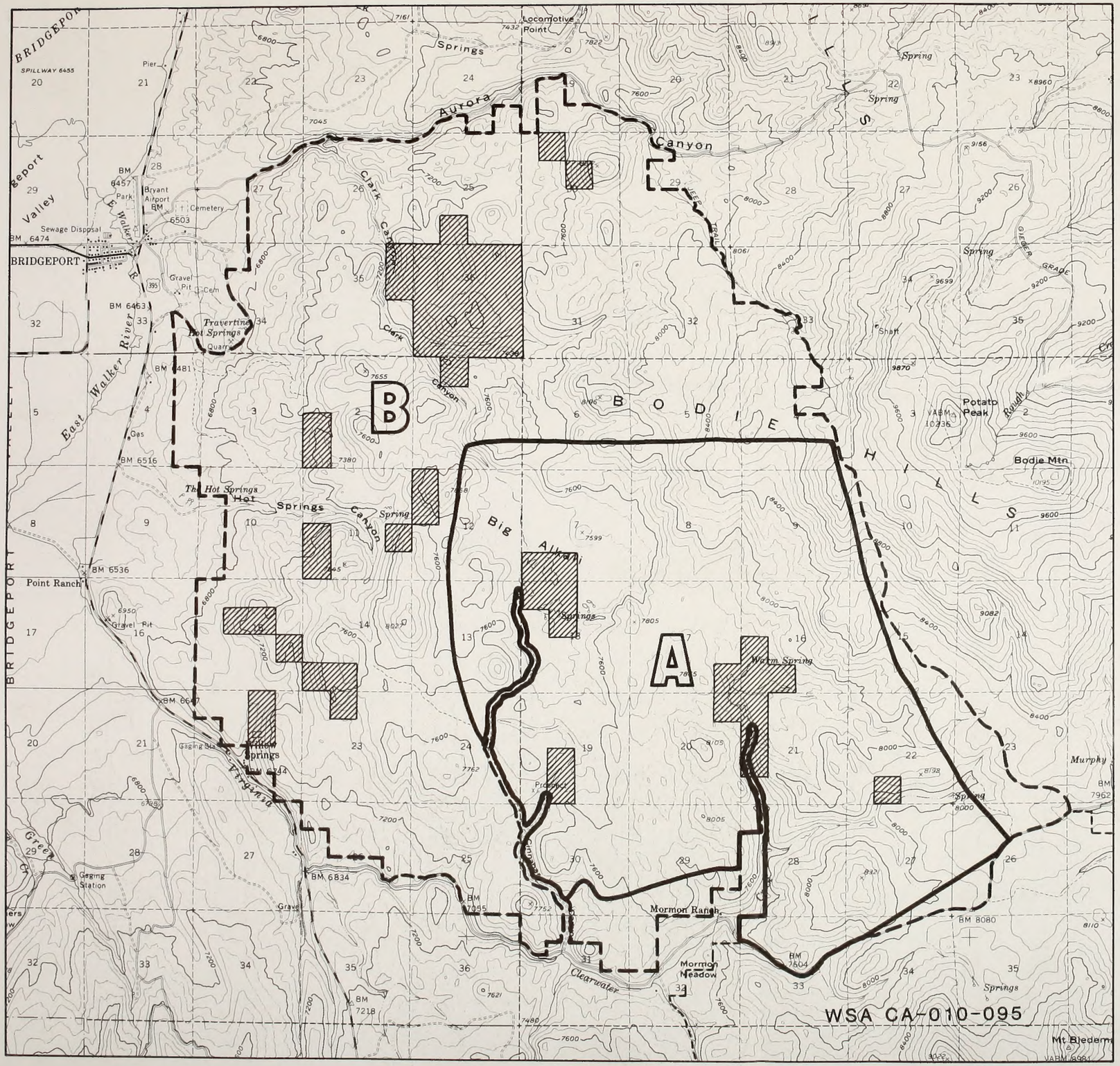

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SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

A — Area Recommended as Suitable

B — Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA

CA-010-099

Partial Wilderness Alternative

MAP 25

Visitor use in the nondesignated portion totals 550 visitor use days per year with 50 of the visitor days attributed to hiking. Vehicle use would continue on 13 miles of existing routes and some instances throughout the WSA which would be designated as open. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. In the long term, visitor use would slowly increase in this area by 200 visitor days to about 750 visitor days per year as a result of the adjoining area's closure to motorized vehicles. The Modesto Ridgerunners would continue to use existing routes in this nondesignated portion for their annual poker rally.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions related to proposed and existing projects in Clark Canyon would be the same as under the Proposed Action. In addition, the proposed vegetative treatment in Hot Springs Canyon would be conducted in the same manner as described under the Proposed Action. The aforementioned proposed and existing projects are located in the nondesignated portion of the unit.

Proposed rehabilitation of three springs and one meadow are located in the designated portion of the unit and would be managed under this alternative in the same manner as under the All Wilderness Alternative. Vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of associated fences would be reduced to 1 day per year.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Of the 9,790 acres recommended as suitable, 33% of the area is occupied by over 200 unpatented mining claims which would be restricted from exploration and development pending a valid existing rights determination. The Cinnabar Canyon area which has a high potential for metallic minerals, a high potential for development and hence a high probability for valid existing rights remains within the designated area. An open-pit mine for sulphur may be developed within the suitable area. The open pit, mill, tailings, and waste rock areas would create 420 acres of disturbance along with 8 miles of new road. One-fourth of the suitable area is covered by geothermal lease applications. The entire suitable area has a high potential for geothermal resources.

The nondesignation of 13,570 acres of the WSA would exclude approximately 148 unpatented mining claims in moderate to low potential areas. The majority of the geothermal lease applications in the WSA would also be excluded and available to lease in high and moderate potential areas. This may result in the exploration for and discovery of a small 10-Mw low temperature geothermal resource in the western quarter of the WSA (particularly around Travertine Hot Springs). This would result in 40 acres of disturbance and 5 miles of associated roads.

Grazing Management Actions

Within the designated area, livestock use would continue to be allocated at 1,020 AUMs for cattle and sheep. Salt block placement would be done on horseback. Sheepherders would continue to use trucks and trailers, but would be restricted to 10 days of vehicle use during the June to October

grazing season in order to reduce unnecessary vehicle traffic. Proposed projects include two buried pipelines totaling 1 mile (3-foot-wide surface disturbance) located in Big Alkali and an unnamed spring in the southeast corner, one reservoir near Big Alkali, and a 2-mile fence along State Route 270. Areas where pipelines would be buried would be rehabilitated with native vegetation in 1 to 2 years. The expected surface disturbance for the additional projects would be one-quarter acre for the reservoir and some shrubs would be removed for the fence. Construction would require vehicle use and would amount to 20 days of use for the pipeline, 2 days for the reservoir, and 10 days for the fence. Inspection and maintenance would require 4 days every year of vehicle use for the pipelines, 2 days use every 10 years for the reservoir, and 1 day of vehicle use for transporting materials to the fence project site. Fence repair would be done by personnel on horseback. The proposed 1 3/4-mile improvement to an existing primitive vehicle route would not be implemented. The existing projects in the designated area include a pipeline 400 feet long in Cinnabar Canyon, a one-quarter-acre exclosure west of Murphy Springs, two reservoirs near an unnamed spring in the WSA's southeast corner and a 3-mile fence near Big Alkali. Inspection and maintenance for these projects would require vehicle use amounting to 2 days use every year for the pipeline, 1 day every 5 years for the exclosure, 4 days every 10 years for the reservoirs, and 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years for the fence to transport materials to the project site. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback.

Within the nondesignated area, livestock would continue to be allocated at 1,250 AUMs of cattle and sheep use. Two days of vehicle use are needed for salt block placement. Sheepherders would continue to use trucks, trailers, and water trucks for 20 days during the June to October grazing season. Projects proposed for construction are a one-half-mile pipeline in Hot Springs Canyon, two reservoirs near Big Alkali, three spring developments located in the northeast corner and Cinnabar Canyon, 4 miles of fence at Travertine Hot Springs and Murphy Springs and a 1¼-mile vehicle route improvement north of Cinnabar Canyon. The surface disturbance would be 3 feet wide for the pipeline, one-half acre for the reservoirs, 75 square feet for the spring developments, and some shrub removal for the fence. Vehicle use for construction would be 10 days vehicle use for the pipeline, 4 days for the reservoirs, 15 days for the three spring developments, 20 days for the fence, 3 days for the vehicle route improvement. Vehicle use needed for inspection and maintenance would be 2 days every year for the pipeline, 4 days of vehicle use every 10 years for the reservoirs, 6 days every year for the spring developments, 3 days every 5 years for the fence and 3 days every 10 years for the road. The existing projects include six fences totaling 9 miles. These fences would require 10 days of vehicle use for inspection and maintenance.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon pine and juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 300 acres of fuelwood are currently accessible and available in the designated portion of the WSA. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed although the use of motorized vehicles would be prohibited. Approximately 300 acres of woodland is available for

pinyon nut collecting in the designated portion. Approximately 8 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who walk to collection areas. These vegetative products are available in adjoining areas.

Approximately 1,320 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is low demand for these vegetative products. Approximately 60 cords of fuelwood per year is available which would result in 30 vehicle trips per year. Casual use of pinyon nut collecting would result in 15 vehicle trips per year (38 visitor days per year). No change in fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting is expected to occur in the long term.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

For the portion of the WSA designated as wilderness, 3¼ miles of State Route 270 would be realigned under emergency conditions, within a prescribed corridor of 200 feet only. For the portion designated as nonwilderness, 1¼ miles of State Route 270 would be realigned outside the present right-of-way into the WSA under emergency conditions such as road washouts, etc.

TABLE 16
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected mineral development activities expected to occur in the Cinnabar Canyon area and geothermal development in the west quarter of the WSA. An open-pit sulphur mine and a geothermal power facility would disturb 460 acres of surface and directly impair naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and some special features of the WSA. A proposed vegetative treatment (probably a prescribed burn) and physical improvement of two primitive vehicle routes would adversely impact naturalness and solitude to varying degrees. In addition, potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270 would necessitate repair and rerouting of the road into the WSA resulting in adverse effects to naturalness and solitude.	The net effect of the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be a slight to moderate enhancement of long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of the area to motor vehicle use, prohibition of physical improvements to existing vehicle routes, prohibition of geothermal development, prohibition of potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270, and a decrease in vehicle use associated with fuelwood cutting, wetland habitat improvements, pinyon nut collection, and grazing operations would provide some benefits to the area's wilderness values. Foregone geothermal development would provide the greatest benefits to wilderness. It is anticipated that the high probability of valid existing rights determination for mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon would result in development of an open-pit sulphur mine. As a result, wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features would be adversely impacted on 420 acres in Cinnabar Canyon.	Designation of the 9,790 acres as wilderness would primarily result in low benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly to naturalness and solitude due to the elimination of 400 annual visitor use days related to motor vehicle access, enhancement of wetland values of three springs and one meadow, the slight reduction of vehicle use related to grazing operations and maintenance of some grazing facilities, the prohibition of physical improvements to 1 3/4 miles of a primitive vehicle route in the designated area's southwest portion, and the prohibition of fuelwood cutting on 300 acres of accessible pinyon-juniper woodland. On the other hand, the high probability of determining valid existing rights for mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon would probably result in a 420-acre open-pit sulphur mine in this area. As a result, this operation would adversely impact naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features in a localized area of the unit. On the 13,570 acres not designated as wilderness, there would be high adverse impacts to wilderness values from the projected development of a 40-acre geothermal power facility in the west quarter of the WSA, particularly around the Travertine

TABLE 16 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values (Continued)			Hot Springs area. In addition, there would be less significant adverse impacts to wilderness values from potential emergency needs for realignment of State Route 270 along a corridor 200 feet north of the boundary road. Fuelwood cutting, motorized vehicle access and physical improvements to a primitive vehicle route (1 1/4 miles) would be allowed resulting in additionaladverse impacts to wilderness values of naturalness and solitude.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use as the entire WSA would remain open for use. Motorized recreation use is anticipated to remain stable at the current 900 visitor days.	Wilderness designation would close the entire 23,360 acres within the WSA to motorized recreation use and eliminate 900 visitor use days. Impacts on motorized recreation use would be minor due to opportunities available outside the WSA.	The impacts on motorized recreation use would be minor due to opportunities outside the WSA as well as increased use of the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. While 400 visitor days would be eliminated from the designated area, an increase of 200 visitor days of motorized recreation use is projected for the nonwilderness portion.
Geothermal Resource Development	There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. The entire WSA would be available for geothermal development including a projected 10-Mw resource.	Exploration and development of geothermal resources within the WSA, including a potential 10-Mw resource, would be foregone. Over the long term this would result in less than a minor impact.	Precluding geothermal resource development on the 9,790 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would result in only a negligible impact with no projected development foregone. Geothermal exploration and development could occur within the remaining 13,570 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness which includes a potential 10-Mw resource. There would be no impact on geothermal resource development within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Alternatives

TABLE 16 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Cultural Resources	Surface-disturbing activities associated with potential geothermal development would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources in areas of predicted very high sensitivity. Surface inventories to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts would be required.	There would be minor positive benefits to cultural resources due to precluding geothermal resource development and continued motorized recreation use.	In the 9,790 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal resource development would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources. Surface inventories would be required to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts. There would be a low positive benefit to cultural resources within the 13,570 acres designated wilderness.
State Route 270 Realignment	Realignment of State Route 270 could occur into the WSA. There would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.	Wilderness designation would limit opportunities and increase costs for emergency realignment of State Route 270 by precluding use of the WSA. This would result in a potential moderate adverse impact.	There would be no impact on the realignment of State Route 270. The Partial Wilderness Alternative boundary establishes a 200-foot-wide corridor along 3 1/2 miles of the roadway for reconstruction. The remaining 1 1/4 miles follow the WSA boundary along the nonwilderness portion and would not be impacted.

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
15,455 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 15,455 acres of public land in the Bodie WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal, the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Bodie-Coleville Management Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, scenic historical values, wildlife, riparian habitat, motorized recreational access, cultural resources, and minerals. Livestock grazing use would be allotted at 2,823 Animal Unit Months (AUMs). (See Map 26.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational activities would continue on existing routes and trails and throughout a majority of the WSA (14,355 acres) which would be designated as open to vehicle use. The Bodie-Coleville MFP designates 1,100 acres in the Bodie Bowl as limited to existing routes and trails. Vehicle use off existing routes is low, however. Approximately 18 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by hunters, sightseers, snowmobilers, hikers, rockhounders, and the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual 4-wheel-drive poker rally. Use is expected to remain stable in the long term at 1,050 visitor use days. Approximately 1,000 of these visitor days are related to vehicle use. In addition, over 72,000 visitors to Bodie State Park view the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA while in the park. State Park use is expected to increase to a level of 100,000 to 125,000 visitor days per year.

No recreation facilities currently exist in the WSA. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan prescribes interpretation for the historical values in the Bodie Bowl. Interpretive facilities could be constructed in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA and would probably consist of interpretive signs and/or an interpretive brochure with post markers.

Wildlife Management Actions

The ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan would be developed to identify areas and to recommend corrective measures for wetland habitats that are being adversely impacted by grazing use. In particular, the Atastra Creek and Rough Creek and four tributaries would be studied.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Approximately 485 mining claims have been located within the WSA, primarily covering the northern three-quarters of the WSA. Metallic potential is high in the Bodie and Paramount Mine areas with development potential also high. The metallic potential is moderate in the northern four-fifths of the WSA and low elsewhere. The existence of a

low-grade gold deposit in the Paramount Mine area may result in the development of an open-pit mine. A mine, mill, tailings, leach pads, and waste rock areas would result in a disturbed area of 420 acres along with 8 miles of new roads. Geothermal lease applications cover the western quarter of the WSA in an area of moderate potential. These would be available to lease. Subsequent to leasing, required diligent exploration would commence in the western quarter resulting in 5 miles of new access roads and 16 acres of disturbance resulting from the drilling of shallow and intermediate exploration wells. With geothermal resource development potential considered low it is not anticipated that exploration would result in resource production. There is low potential for uranium and nonmetallic minerals, no potential for sodium, potassium, oil and gas.

Grazing Management Actions

Under the Proposed Action, the WSA would continue to be allocated at 2,823 AUMs of cattle use from June through October. Salt blocks would be placed by trucks requiring 2 days of vehicle use. Proposed projects include three spring developments scattered throughout the WSA, three pipelines totaling 3¼ miles in the northeast and southwest corners, and a 5-mile fence in the south half. The spring developments would disturb a total surface area of 75 square feet, the pipelines' disturbance after burial would be 3 feet wide, and the fence would have some shrub removal disturbance. Vehicle use for construction of these projects would amount to 15 days for the spring developments, 35 days for the pipelines, and 30 days for the fence. Inspection and maintenance would require vehicle use 6 days every year for the spring developments, 9 days every year for the pipelines, and 15 days every 5 years for the fence. The existing facilities are a 4-mile fence in the northwest corner and three exclosures near Paramount Mine and Milk Ranch Canyon. The fence would require 8 days of vehicle use every 5 years for inspection and maintenance, and the exclosures would need 3 days of vehicle use every 5 years.

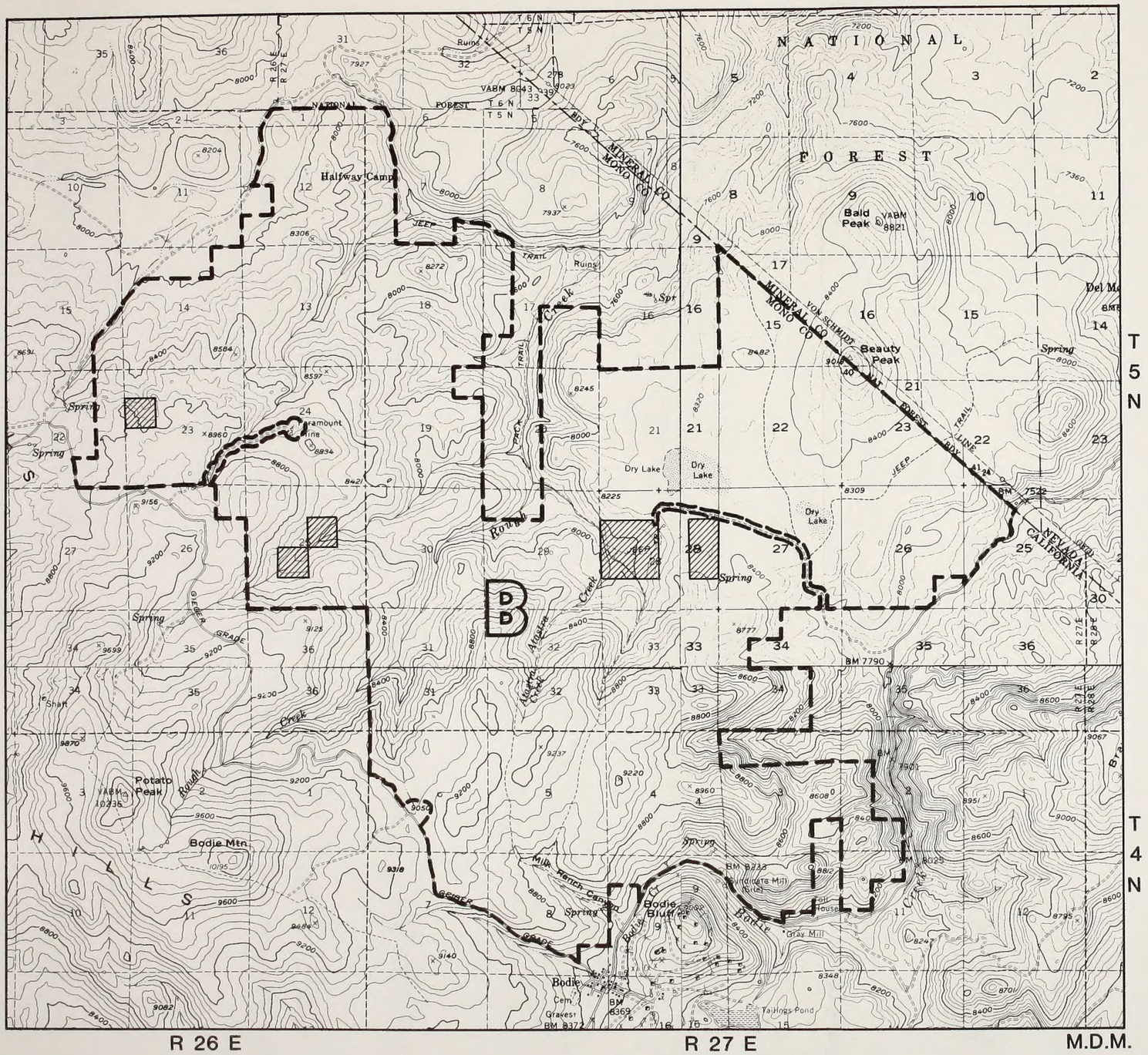
Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Approximately 480 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is a low demand for these vegetative products. Approximately 20 cords of fuelwood per year is available which would result in 10 vehicle trips per year. Casual use of pinyon nut collecting would result in 10 vehicle trips per year (25 visitor days). No change in fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting is expected to occur in the long term.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

15,455 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 15,455 acres in the Bodie WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Eighteen miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. New mining claims would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 2,823 AUMs.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

BODIE WSA

CA-010-100

Proposed Action

(No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 26

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 1,000 visitor days related to motorized vehicle access. It is anticipated that 150 of these visitor days would continue in this WSA without the use of motor vehicles. These types of users include hunters. Approximately 18 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. The Modesto Ridgerunners would relocate portions of their four-wheel-drive annual poker rally to adjoining areas which are limited. The 50 visitor days related to nonmotorized recreation activities such as hiking would remain stable in the long term. Thus, nonmotorized recreation use would total 200 visitor days per year--consisting mostly of hunters, hikers, and sightseers. In addition, over 72,000 visitors to Bodie State Park view the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA while in the park. This use is expected to increase to a level of 100,000 to 125,000 visitor days per year.

No recreation facilities currently exist in the WSA. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan prescribes interpretation of historical values in the Bodie Bowl. Interpretative facility development would be prohibited in the designated area. Interpretive facilities would be developed outside the unit. Interpretive facilities would probably consist of interpretive signs.

Wildlife Management Actions

The wildlife management actions under this alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation as wilderness, all 15,455 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining, salable mineral and leasing laws subject to valid existing rights. Exploration and development of the area's moderate geothermal potential would be prohibited. Geothermal leases covering the western quarter would be denied. Approximately 485 unpatented mining claims would be restricted from the exploration and development pending valid existing rights determination. The Paramount Mine area has a high potential for metallic mineral occurrence as well as a high development potential which may result in the development of an open-pit gold mine. The mine, mill, leach pads, tailings, and waste rock areas would result in approximately 420 acres of disturbance as well as construction of 8 miles of new roads.

Grazing Management Actions

Under this alternative, livestock grazing would be the same as the Proposed Action. Salt block placement would be done by horseback. The proposed projects' location, type, disturbance, and vehicle use for construction and maintenance would be the same as the Proposed Action except that vehicle use for fence maintenance would be reduced to 3 days every 5 years in order to drop off fence materials. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback. Vehicle use for the existing 4-mile fence and three exclosures would be reduced to 2 days every 5 years and 1 day every 5 years respectively.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon pine and juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 480 acres of fuelwood are currently accessible and available. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed although the use of motorized vehicles would be prohibited. Approximately 480 acres of woodland is available for collecting. Approximately 13 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who walk to collection areas. These vegetative products are available in adjoining areas.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,945 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
8,510 Acres Nonwilderness

This Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 6,945 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA would be managed to preserve wilderness values and permit existing livestock operations to continue. The remainder of the WSA would not be designated as wilderness. Management of the nonwilderness portion would be under the Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, scenic historical values, wildlife, riparian habitat, motorized recreational access, cultural resources, and minerals management.

Recreation Use Management Actions

Approximately 45% of the WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use. Approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Approximately 450 visitor use days would be eliminated that are related to motor vehicle use. Many of these visitors would shift their activities to and continue using the nondesignated portion, although about 200 visitors would continue to use the designated area by primitive means such as foot travel. Long-term use in the designated portion would total about 225 visitor use days per year. This includes present nonmotorized recreation users such as hikers as well as recreationists who formerly used the area with motor vehicles and have shifted their use to a primitive means of travel.

Interpretive facilities would be constructed in the designated portion (Bodie Bowl) of the WSA as described in the proposed action.

Visitor use in the nondesignated portion totals 550 visitor use days per year with 25 of the visitor use days attributed to hiking. The remainder is attributed to recreationists such as snowmobilers, hunters, general sightseers, etc. Vehicle use would continue on 14 miles of existing routes and in some instances throughout the WSA which would be designated as open. The open area totals 7,410 acres. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. In the long term, motorized recreation use would slowly increase in this area to about 750 visitor days per year as a result of the adjoining area's closure to motorized vehicles. The Modesto Ridgerunners would continue to use existing routes in this nondesignated portion for their annual poker rally.

Wildlife Management Actions

For both the designated and nondesignated portions of the WSA, wildlife management actions under this alternative would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Within the 6,945 acres recommended as suitable, 175 unpatented mining claims would be restricted from exploration or development pending determination of valid existing rights, 10 of which lie within an area of high metallic potential. The entire suitable area has a moderate potential for geothermal resources.

In the nondesignated area, approximately 310 unpatented mining claims exist in moderate to high metallic potential areas. The Paramount Mine area may be developed into an open-pit gold mine, resulting in 420 acres of disturbance and 8 miles of roads. All of the geothermal lease applications would be excluded and available to lease. One-half of the WSA would be available to explore, lease and develop geothermal resources in a moderate potential area with low development potential. Exploration activities and surface disturbances would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Grazing Management Actions

Within the designated area of the WSA, cattle use would continue to be allocated at 1,270 AUMs during June through October. Salt block placement would be done by horseback. Proposed projects include a spring development in the northwest corner, a pipeline totaling 1 mile near Geiger Road, and a 3-mile fence in the area's center part. The spring development would disturb 25 square feet, the pipeline's surface disturbance after burial would be 3 feet wide, and the fence would have some shrub removal disturbance. Vehicle use for construction of these projects would amount to 5 days for the spring developments, 10 days for the pipeline, and 15 days for the fence. Inspection and maintenance would require vehicle use of 2 days every year for the spring development, 3 days every year for the pipeline, and 2 days every 5 years for the fence. The existing facilities are two exclosures near the headwaters of Atastra Creek. For inspection and maintenance, the exclosures would need 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years.

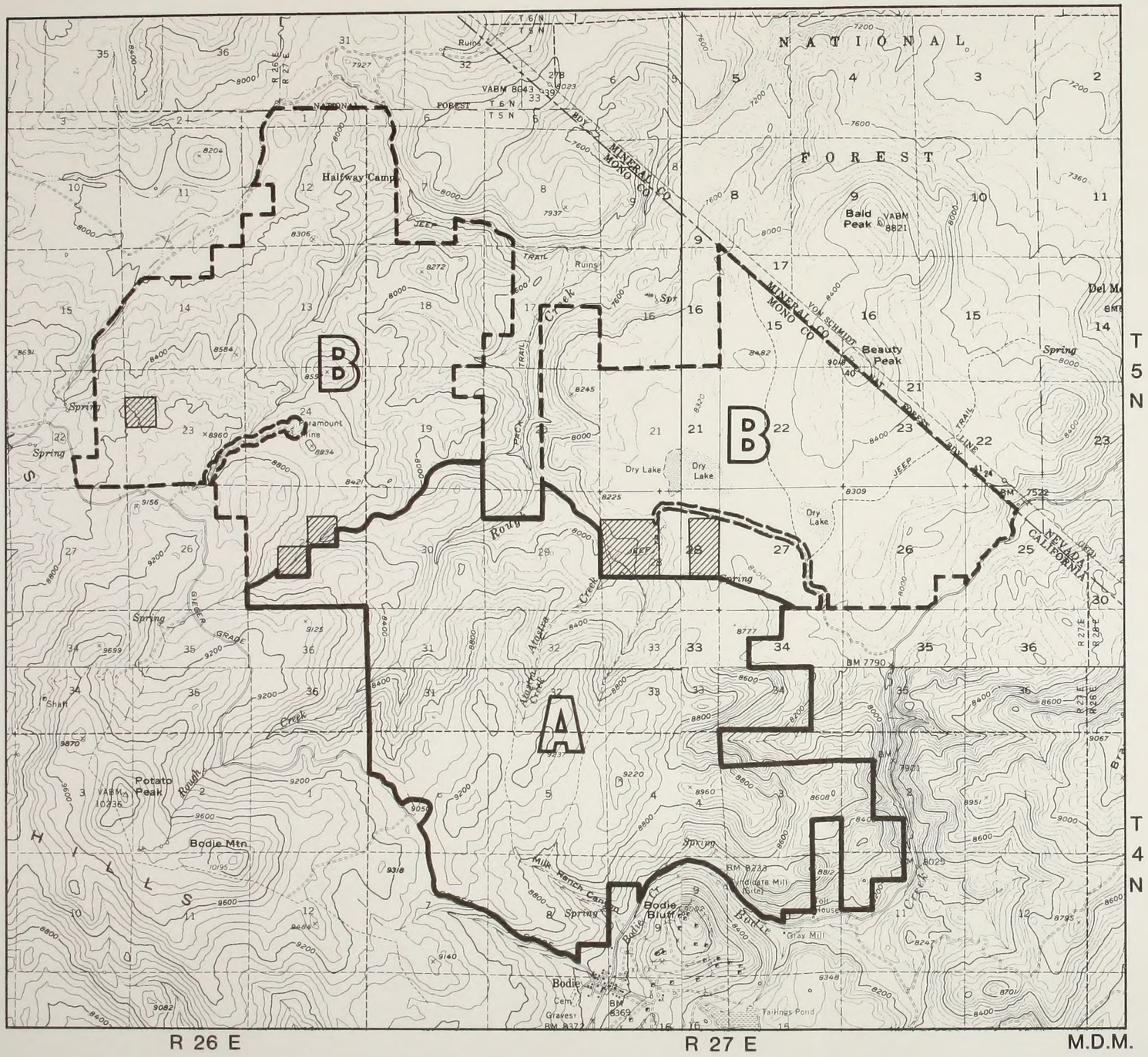
Within the nonwilderness area of the WSA, cattle use would continue to be allocated at 1,553 AUMs during June through October. Salt blocks would be placed by trucks requiring 2 days of vehicle use. Proposed projects include two spring developments near Paramount Mine and the Dry Lakes, two pipelines totaling 2¼ miles on Dry Lakes Plateau, and a 2-mile fence on Dry Lakes Plateau. The spring developments would disturb 50 square feet, the pipeline's surface disturbance after burial would be 3 feet wide, and the fence would have some shrub removal disturbance. Vehicle use for construction of these projects would amount to 10 days for the spring developments, 25 days for the pipelines, and 10 days for the fence. Inspection and maintenance would require vehicle use of 4 days every year for the spring developments, 6 days every year for the pipelines, and 2

days every 5 years for the fence. The existing facilities are a 4-mile fence and an exclosure both near Paramount Mine. The fence would require 8 days of vehicle use every 5 years for inspection and maintenance, the exclosure would need 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon pine and juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 180 acres of fuelwood are currently accessible and available in the designated portion of the WSA. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed although the use of motorized vehicles would be prohibited. Approximately 180 acres of woodland is available for pinyon nut collecting in the designated portion. Approximately 5 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who walk to collection areas. These vegetative products are available in adjoining areas.

Approximately 300 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is low demand for these vegetative products. Approximately 12 cords of fuelwood per year is available which would result in 6 vehicle trips per year. Casual use of pinyon nut collection would result in 10 vehicle trips per year (25 visitor days per year). No change in fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting is expected to occur in the long term.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Suitable

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

BODIE WSA

CA-010-100

Partial Wilderness Alternative

MAP 27

TABLE 17
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE BODIE WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected mineral development activities expected to occur in the Paramount Mine area and in portions of the WSA's west quarter. An open-pit mine and projected geothermal exploration would disturb 436 acres of surface and directly impair naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features, particularly crucial fawning habitat, of the WSA.	The net effect of the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be a slight to, perhaps, minor enhancement of the long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use, prohibition of geothermal exploration, and a decrease in vehicle use associated with fuelwood cutting and pinyon nut collection, would provide minor benefits to wilderness values. Foregone geothermal exploration and any unforeseen development would provide the greatest benefits to wilderness. The high probability of valid existing rights determination for mining claims in the Paramount Mine area would lead to the development of an open-pit gold mine. As a result, wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features would be adversely impacted in the Paramount Mine area.	Designation of the 6,945 acres as wilderness would primarily result in low positive benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly to naturalness and solitude due to the elimination of 450 annual visitor use days related to motor vehicle access, a slight reduction of vehicle use related to grazing operations and maintenance, and the prohibition of fuelwood cutting on 180 acres of accessible pinyon-juniper woodland. On the 8,510 acres not designated as wilderness there would be high adverse impacts to wilderness values from projected development of a 420-acre open-pit gold mine near the Paramount Mine area. In addition, there would be some temporary impacts to wilderness values from projected geothermal exploration on 16 acres of public lands in the WSA's west quarter. Very slight adverse impacts to wilderness values would occur from continued motor vehicle use related to recreation, fuelwood cutting, and pinyon nut collection.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the WSA. Use will continue as prescribed in the Bodie-Coleville MFP and is projected to remain stable at the current 1,000 visitor days.	Wilderness designation would close the entire 15,455-acre WSA and eliminate 1,000 visitor days. Due to the relatively large number of displaced users including the Modesto Ridgerunner's 4-WD poker rally this would result in a moderate impact on motorized recreation use.	Impacts on motorized recreation use in the wilderness portion of the WSA would only be minor due to opportunities outside the WSA as well as increased use of the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. While 450 visitor days would be eliminated from the designated area, an increase in the nondesignated portion from the current 550

TABLE 17 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE BODIE WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use (Cont.)			visitor days to a projected 750 visitor days would limit overall impacts to motorized recreation use.
Geothermal Resource Development	There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. The entire WSA would be available for geothermal development however only exploration activities are anticipated.	There would only be negligible impacts to geothermal resource development. Exploration in the western quarter of the WSA would be foregone. However, no development is projected within the WSA due to only a moderate potential for geothermal resources with a low development potential.	There would be only a very minimal impact on geothermal resource development as a result of wilderness designation of 6,945 acres. Within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA there would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. Projected exploration activities could occur.
Cultural Resources	Surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal exploration would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources in areas of predicted very high sensitivity. Surface inventories to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts would be required.	There would be low positive benefits to cultural resources due to precluding geothermal exploration and continued motorized recreation use.	In the 8,510 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal exploration would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources. Surface inventories would be required to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts. There would be a low positive benefit to cultural resources within the 6,945 acres designated wilderness.
Crucial Deer and Pronghorn Antelope Fawning Habitat	Mineral development in the Paramount Mine area would result in the direct loss of 420 acres and a long-term loss of productivity representing 17% of the available fawning habitat. Geothermal development would result in only minor short-term impacts to crucial fawning habitat.	Wilderness designation would result in minor positive benefits to crucial fawning habitat due to the elimination of 1,000 visitor days and preclusion of geothermal exploration. However, projected open-pit mining would occur whether the area is designated wilderness of not. Mineral development in the Paramount Mine area would result in direct loss of 420 acres of fawning habitat and a long-term loss of productivity representing 17% of available fawning habitat.	There would be only a minor positive benefit to crucial fawning habitat within the 6,945 acres designated wilderness. Mining activity within the nondesignated portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of 420 acres of habitat and a long-term loss of productivity on 1,500 acres representing 17% of the available fawning habitat in the WSA. Geothermal development would only result in minor short-term impacts to crucial fawning habitat.

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,600 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 6,600 acres of public land in the Masonic Mountains WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. Under this proposal, the lands would be managed in accordance with the existing Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan which emphasizes livestock grazing, wildlife, riparian habitat, motorized recreational access, minerals management, and community expansion needs for the Bridgeport Indian Colony. Livestock grazing use would be allotted at 1,252 Animal Unit Months (AUMs). (See Map 28.)

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreational activities would continue on existing routes and trails and throughout the WSA which would be designated as open to vehicle use. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. Approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to be used by hunters, sightseers and the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual four-wheel-drive poker rally. Total yearly use is about 475 visitor use days with 450 visitor days related to motorized recreation use. Use is expected to remain stable over the long term. No recreation facilities exist and none are planned.

Wildlife Management Actions

As part of the Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan, exclosure fencing and reestablishment of native vegetation would occur along portions of Rock Springs Canyon on the southeast boundary of the WSA for stream rehabilitation totaling one-quarter mile. Project work associated with the stream rehabilitation would require the use of two vehicles over a 4-day period. The rehabilitation of one spring in the McMillan Spring area would involve approximately 100 feet of exclosure fencing and reestablishment of native vegetation. The use of one vehicle for 3 days would be required for the spring rehabilitation.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. Approximately 21 mining claims have been located in the eastern half of the WSA in areas of moderate (Masonic area) to low metallic occurrence potential. Development potential is also moderate to low. Due to a moderate possibility of gold discovery in the Masonic area, there is a potential for the development of a medium-sized open-pit mine for a disseminated gold deposit. Development would result in the disturbance of 145 acres for the mine, mill, tailings, and waste rock areas as well as construction of 4 miles of roads. The WSA has a predominantly moderate potential for geothermal resources with high potential in the southwest corner. Geothermal lease applications cover the southwest corner and would be available for sale. Development potential is moderate. Due to

the potential for geothermal resources and the fact that development is occurring 1 mile south of the WSA, it may be anticipated that the discovery and development of a small 10-Mw low temperature geothermal resource would occur in this area. Development would result in 40 acres of disturbance for drill pads, pipelines, powerlines and generating facility as well as 5 miles of roads. Nonmetallic mineral potential is low for the majority of the WSA, however, the western third is moderate for sand and gravel. The development potential is high due to limited sources for sand and gravel in this area. It may be anticipated that increase in future demand would result in the mining of sand and gravel in the extreme northwest portion of the WSA. Development would result in 10 acres of disturbance for the material pit along with construction of less than 1 mile of road. Uranium potential is low and there is no potential for thorium, sodium, potassium, oil and gas.

Grazing Management Actions

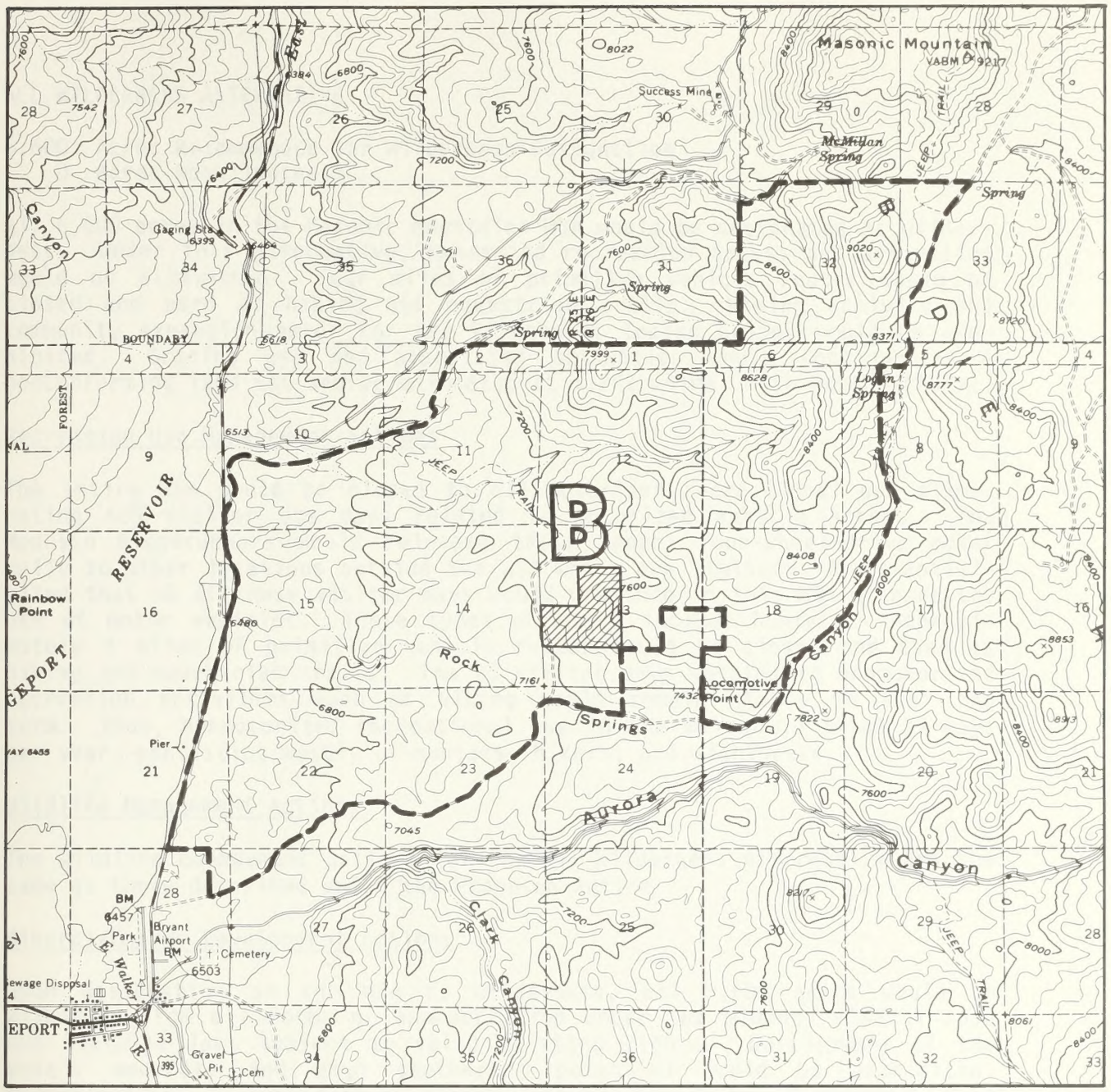
Under the Proposed Action the WSA would continue to be allocated at 1,252 AUMs of cattle use during June through September and the livestock driveway along the west side would continue to be used by sheep and cattle. Salt block placement would be done by trucks averaging 2 days of vehicle use each year. Proposed projects include a spring development in the northwest corner and four reservoirs in the west half. Surface disturbance by development would amount to 25 square feet for the spring development and a total of 1 acre for the reservoirs. Construction of the projects would require vehicle use totaling 5 days for the spring development and 8 days of vehicle use for each of the reservoirs. Inspection and maintenance for the proposed projects would require 2 days every year of vehicle use for the spring development and 8 days every 10 years for the reservoirs. Existing facilities are a 3-mile fence along the west boundary and two spring developments along the north boundary. Inspection and maintenance for the fence would continue to require 6 days of vehicle use every 5 years and the spring developments would require 4 days of vehicle use every year.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collection Management Actions

Approximately 1,000 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection. There is low demand for these vegetative products. Approximately 40 cords of fuelwood per year is available which would result in 20 vehicle trips per year. Casual use of pinyon nut collecting would result in 15 vehicle trips per year (38 visitor days). No change in fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting is expected to occur in the long term.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

Approximately 120 acres of public land would be granted to the Bridgeport Indian Colony under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act for long-term expansion needs and future of the colony for residential and commercial development. While there has been no formal application at this time, the Colony has expressed an interest.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA

CA-010-102

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 28

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,600 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 6,600 acres in the Masonic Mountains WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative, motorized recreation access and activities would be eliminated. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Mining activity and community expansion needs for the Bridgeport Indian Colony would be prohibited. Grazing use and associated activities would continue as a nonconforming land use and be allocated at 1,252 Animal Unit Months (AUMs).

Recreation Use Management Actions

The entire WSA would be closed to all motorized recreational use eliminating 425 visitor use days related to motorized vehicle access. The Modesto Ridgerunners would relocate their annual four-wheel-drive poker rally to other locations outside the WSA which are limited. It is anticipated that 50 of these visitor days would continue in this WSA without the use of motor vehicles. These types of users include hunters. Approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. The 25 visitor days related to nonmotorized recreation activities such as hiking would remain stable in the long term. Thus, nonmotorized recreational use in the WSA would total 75 days per year--consisting mostly of hunters, hikers, and sightseers.

Wildlife Management Actions

The wildlife management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative are the same as those described under the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

Upon designation of the WSA as wilderness, all 6,600 acres would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining, mineral sale and leasable laws subject to valid existing rights. Development of the area's moderate and high geothermal potential would be prohibited. Approximately 21 unpatented mining claims would be restricted from exploration and development pending BLM determination of valid existing rights, in an area of moderate to low metallic potential. There is a low probability that valid existing rights could be shown resulting in a prohibition of mining activities. The WSA's moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals (sand and gravel) with a high development potential would be closed to disposal.

Grazing Management Actions

Under wilderness, the WSA would continue to be allocated at 1,252 AUMs of cattle use during June through September and the livestock driveway along the west boundary would continue to be used by sheep and cattle. Salt blocks would be distributed on horseback. Proposed and existing projects are the same as the Proposed Action, except for vehicle use concerning the

existing fence. Vehicle use for fence maintenance would decrease to 2 days every 5 years for the fence in order to transport materials. Fence maintenance would be done on horseback.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

Casual use related to fuelwood cutting of pinyon pine and juniper would be prohibited. Approximately 1,000 acres of fuelwood are currently accessible and available. Casual pinyon nut collection would be allowed although the use of motorized vehicles would be prohibited. Approximately 1,000 acres of woodland is available for collecting. Approximately 19 visitor days per year would continue by pinyon nut gatherers who walk to collection areas. These vegetative products are available in adjoining areas.

Land Tenure Adjustment Actions

The disposal of 120 acres of public lands in the designated area to the Bridgeport Indian Colony for community expansion needs under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act would be prohibited.

TABLE 18
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	On an overall basis there would be a minor impact to wilderness values throughout the 6,600-acre Masonic Mountains WSA. Localized impacts near the northwest and southwest boundaries from mining activity and geothermal development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 180 acres and impair the perception of naturalness and solitude on a total of 1,000 acres. Future residential and commercial development for the Bridgeport Indian Colony on 120 acres of public land within the WSA would result in a direct loss of naturalness and adversely impact the perception of naturalness and solitude throughout the southwest portion. Continued motorized recreation use, fuelwood harvesting, pinyon nut collecting, and construction and maintenance of livestock facilities and wildlife projects would result in only negligible to minor local impacts. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited primarily along the boundary of the WSA in areas of mining activity, geothermal development, expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony and continued vehicle use. Special features including sensitive plants and crucial deer fawning habitat would be retained.	Wilderness designation of the entire 6,600 acres within the Masonic Mountains WSA would result in positive benefits to the wilderness values. Naturalness and solitude would be significantly retained locally by prohibiting mining activities that would affect 300 acres and geothermal development affecting 700 acres. Potential expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony within the WSA would be precluded retaining wilderness values within the surrounding 700 acres. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained throughout the WSA. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation would result in a slight positive benefit to wilderness values. Special features including sensitive plants and crucial deer fawning habitat would be retained and slightly enhanced.

TABLE 18 (Cont.)
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the WSA. The current 450 visitor use days per year are expected to remain stable.	The entire WSA would be closed eliminating 450 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use. Only minor adverse impacts are anticipated due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA and the accessibility of the WSA by foot.
Mineral Development	There would be no impacts on mineral development. An open-pit gold mine and a sand and gravel operation are anticipated for development within the WSA.	Development of potential mineral resources within the WSA would be foregone. Known deposits of sand and gravel and projected deposits of disseminated gold would not be available for development.
Geothermal Development	There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. The entire WSA would be available for exploration and development including a projected 10-Mw low temperature resource.	Geothermal resource development would be prohibited. Development of a potential 10-Mw low temperature geothermal resource would be foregone. Over the long term, this would result in only a minor impact.
Potential Indian Colony Expansion	There would be no impact on potential expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony to meet their future needs.	Since public lands would not be available for potential expansion needs of the Bridgeport Indian Colony, there could be an adverse impact.

SLINKARD WSA
(CA-010-105/NV-030-531)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,760 Acres Nonwilderness

The Proposed Action for the Slinkard WSA is not to designate any of the WSA wilderness. The WSA will be managed under the BLM's existing Bodie-Coleville MFP for the Bakersfield District and the MFP for the Carson City District which emphasize livestock grazing, motorized recreational access, scenic values, and wildlife habitat.

Recreation Use Management Actions

All motorized recreation access would be available in the WSA under the Proposed Action. Vehicle use on the east side of the WSA is designated as open; however, due to the rugged terrain and lack of public access, use is very limited and estimated to be less than 10 visitor days per year on the one mile of existing primitive vehicle routes in this portion of the WSA. The west side of the WSA is more accessible and motorized recreation access is limited to designated routes and trails which total approximately 2 miles. Less than 5 visitor days of snowmobile use occur on the west slope of the WSA. Total use in the WSA is estimated at less than 100 visitor days per year with motorized access accounting for approximately 70 visitor days. Due to the inaccessibility of the WSA and lack of established vehicle routes use is not anticipated to increase significantly and would most likely not exceed 100 visitor days per year. Nonmotorized recreation is primarily associated with hunting as is the motorized recreation use. No recreation facilities exist within the WSA and none are planned due to the low use and low demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

A habitat management plan for mule deer will be prepared in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game. The objectives of the plan will be to maintain existing herd population and the availability of habitat used for crucial winter habitat and fawning areas as well as migration corridors.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

No mineral development is anticipated in the WSA due to the mineral potential and development potential generally being low to nonexistent. Potential for uranium is considered to be moderate. However, due to the uncertainty of occurrence, depressed market conditions and the availability of known reserves outside the WSA, development potential is considered to be low. No development is anticipated for the 18 unpatented mining claims which are located in the extreme northwest portion of the WSA. Mineral assessment work is anticipated to disturb less than one-half acre per year.

While there is a moderate potential for geothermal resources, the development potential is considered to be low due to the lack of outward indications of a geothermal resource and the lack of industry interest. No exploration or development is anticipated.

Grazing Management Actions

The WSA will continue to provide 526 AUMs for cattle and sheep in the Slinkard and Bagley Valley allotments. Use primarily occurs from May through October. There are no livestock facilities in the WSA and none are proposed.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

Dead and down as well as dead and standing noncommercial pinyon juniper fuelwood would be available for cutting on 360 acres of the WSA. Based on the availability of deadwood and low demand it is estimated that less than 30 cords would be harvested requiring less than 15 vehicle trips.

Pinyon nut collecting would also occur on the same 360 acres with motorized vehicular access permitted. Casual use for pinyon nut collecting is estimated at less than 25 visitor use days annually resulting in 10 vehicle trips.

Watershed Management Actions

Rehabilitation of three-quarters of a mile of Slinkard Creek Tributary 1 in the northern portion of the WSA is proposed for gully control and main stream channel stabilization. Placement of instream gabions and planting of native riparian vegetation will be done to accomplish the necessary rehabilitations due to livestock use. Use of a small tractor, dump truck and pickup truck would be required over a 10-day period.

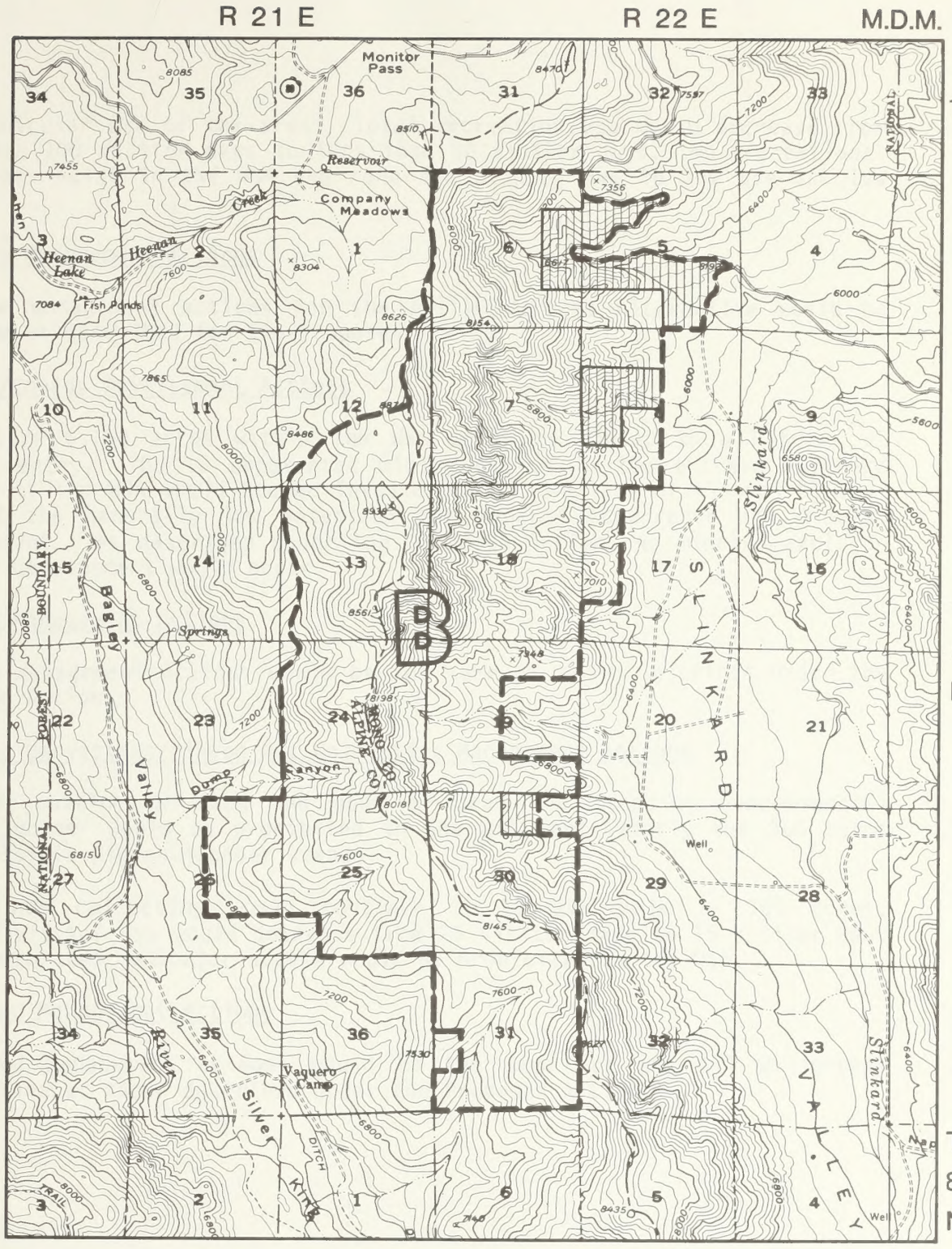
ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,760 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

All 6,760 acres in the Slinkard WSA would be designated as wilderness. Under this alternative motorized recreational access and activities would be eliminated. Three miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and used as hiking and equestrian trails. Livestock grazing would continue at the existing use level of 526 AUMs. The WSA would be closed to mineral development and existing claims would be invalidated.

Recreation Use Management Actions

Motorized recreation access would be prohibited throughout the entire 6,760 acres. Three miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed. Existing motorized use of the area would decrease by 70 visitor days per year including less than 5 visitor days of snowmobiling on the west slope. Nonmotorized recreational use is anticipated to increase by 50 visitor days due primarily to hunting use that previously was associated



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Split Estate within WSA

Area Recommended as Nonsuitable

SLINKARD WSA

CA-010-105 / NV-030-531

Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)

MAP 29

with vehicular use of the area. Total recreation use would decrease from less than 100 visitor days to less than 80 visitor days. No recreational facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned due to low use and low demand.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions for the All Wilderness Alternative would be the same as described for the Proposed Action.

Mineral/Energy Development Actions

The entire 6,760 acres within the WSA would be closed to all forms of mineral entry. The 18 unpatented mining claims in the extreme northern portion of the WSA would become invalid due to the lack of mineral discovery and the generally low potential for mineral occurrence and mineral development. As described under the Proposed Action, no mineral exploration or development would occur.

Grazing Management Actions

Grazing management actions would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action.

Fuelwood Harvesting/Pinyon Nut Collecting Management Actions

Fuelwood cutting of dead and down or dead and standing noncommercial pinyon-juniper would be prohibited in the WSA particularly the 360 acres of accessible pinyon-juniper stands.

Pinyon nut collecting would continue to be available in 360 acres. However visitor use would decrease from 25 visitor days to 15 visitor days since motorized vehicular access would be prohibited in the WSA.

Watershed Management Actions

Watershed management actions would be the same for the All Wilderness Alternative as those described under the Proposed Action.

TABLE 19
COMPARISON OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE SLINKARD WSA

ISSUE-RELATED RESOURCES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Wilderness Values	Wilderness values within the 6,760 acres of the WSA would essentially remain unchanged. Only slight or negligible impacts would occur from continued low levels of vehicle use for recreation, fuelwood harvesting, and pinyon nut collecting. Annual mining claim assessment work would impair the perception of naturalness on less than 5 acres.	Wilderness designation of the entire 6,760 acres within the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to all wilderness values. Elimination of motorized recreation use and casual vehicle use associated with fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting would slightly improve solitude as well as the deer fawning and winter habitat. Prohibiting mining claim assessment work would maintain the perception of naturalness on a localized basis.
Motorized Recreation Use	There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the WSA. The current 70 visitor days per year are anticipated to increase slightly but will remain less than 100 visitor days per year.	The entire WSA would be closed, eliminating 70 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Only minor adverse impacts are anticipated due to the low level of use.

Alternatives

Chapter 3

Affected Environment

CHAPTER 3

THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This chapter includes a brief description of each WSA and the resources that could be affected by the management actions of the Proposed Action and the alternatives.

Additional detailed descriptions of the resources in the study area are included in planning documents for each of the planning areas. These documents are available and may be reviewed at the Bakersfield District Office and the Carson City District Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

SACATAR MEADOWS
(CA-010-027)

The Sacatar Meadows WSA contains 18,175 acres of BLM public lands. The WSA is situated on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada and along lateral ridges extending west from the crest. These rocky ridges rise sharply from Sacatar and Scodie Meadows to elevations over 8,000 feet. The vegetative cover is primarily pinyon pine with big sage meadows occurring at lower elevations outside the WSA.

The unit is bounded on the south by nonpublic lands in the Scobie and Big Pine Meadows and Kennedy Meadows Road, on the north by the Sequoia National Forest, and on the east by the BLM's California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The CDCA lands are part of the Little Lake Canyon WSA (CDCA-157).

(See Map 30, p. 3-3.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The Sacatar Meadows WSA generally appears to have been affected by the forces of nature with human influences only apparent in the valley floors and along the boundaries with private lands. These include 14 miles of unobtrusive primitive vehicle routes and two spring developments for livestock use. A residential subdivision has been developed outside the WSA to the northwest, however these nonpublic lands extend like fingers into the WSA. The major ridgelines within the unit appear untouched by human activity.

Solitude

The irregular configuration, narrow shape, and the penetrating nature of the nonpublic land pattern greatly limit opportunities for solitude. The expanding residential development and private land demands in the Kennedy Meadows area along the northwest boundary are apparent from the WSA's ridgelines and influence the opportunities for solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

As with solitude, the irregular configuration and narrow shape hamper opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within the WSA. When considered in conjunction with the CDCA's Little Lake Canyon WSA, opportunities are greatly expanded as the many deep canyons help contribute to an unconfined experience.

Special Features

The WSA includes habitat for Phacelia novenmillensis a USFWS candidate species plant. A migration route for the Monache deer herd crosses through the northern portion of the WSA.

VEGETATION

The vegetative cover is primarily pinyon pine and western juniper scattered throughout. Higher elevations of the WSA support small isolated stands of ponderosa pine and red fir. Meadows within the unit are being invaded by brush species. The WSA contains an ecotone formed by the convergence of desert and Sierran vegetative communities.

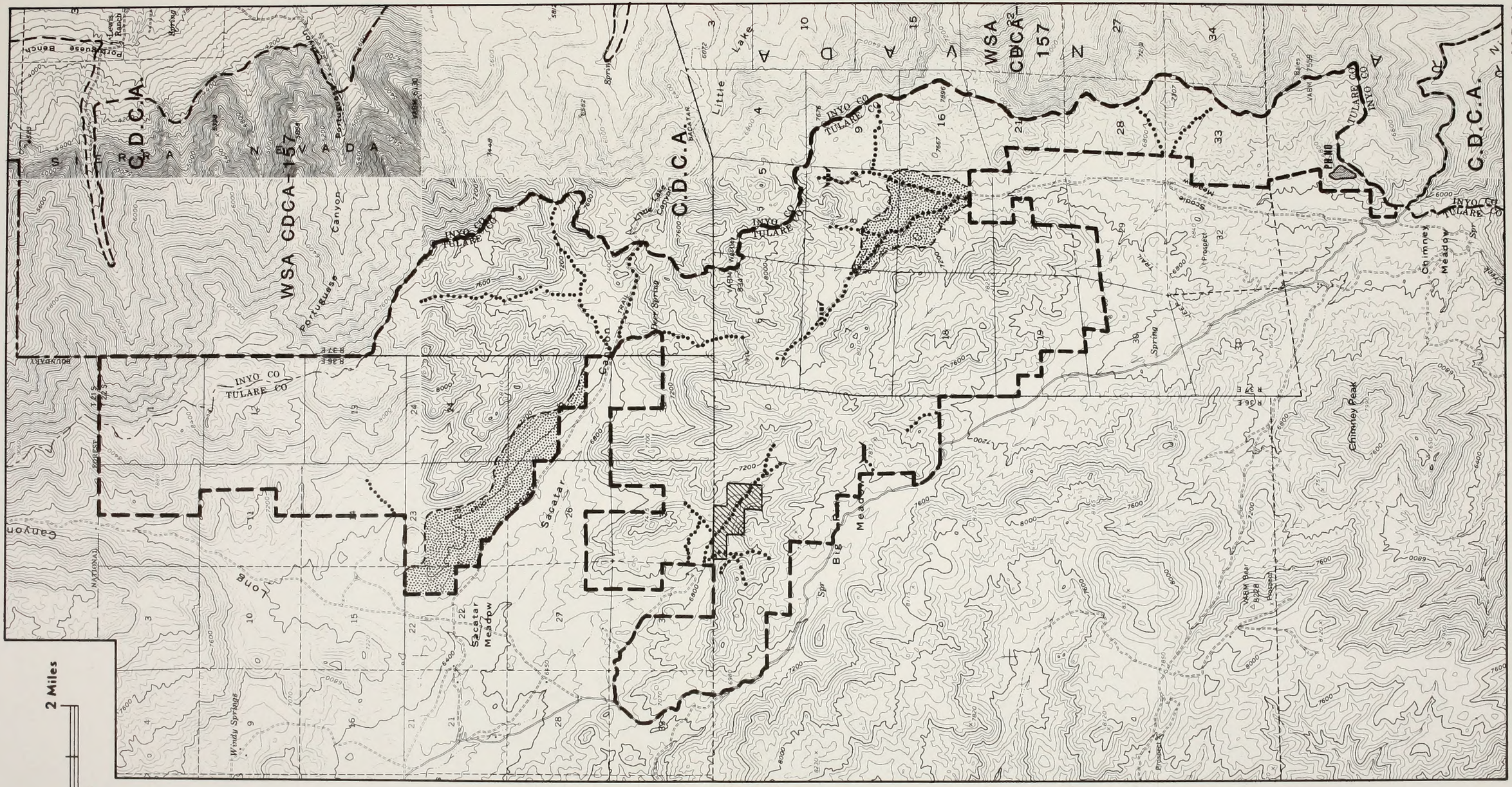
The WSA contains one known population as well as potential habitat for Phacelia novenmillensis, an annual plant which is considered a candidate species by the USFWS. The habitat is located in the southern portion of the WSA on south-facing slopes at the higher elevation. One known population exists above the upper reaches of Nine Mile Canyon at approximately the 6,800 foot elevation.

GRAZING

The WSA contains portions of three allotments, Walker Pass Common, Sacatar Meadow, and Scodie. Grazing in the WSA is authorized for cattle, and used in conjunction with private land. Estimated forage production within the WSA is 462 AUMs. Dense vegetation and steep slopes cause most of the grazing to occur outside the WSA on privately owned land. Two additional spring developments are proposed within the WSA, as well as two vegetative manipulation projects totaling 1,000 acres intended to increase forage production by 167 AUMs.

WILDLIFE

The predominately pinyon pine woodland plant community in this WSA is high in wildlife species diversity and abundance. There are at least 64 bird, 21 mammal, 10 reptile and 3 amphibian species which use the WSA as seasonal or year-round habitat. The species that are particularly interesting include mountain lion, black bear, beaver, gray fox, desert night lizard, California slender salamander, California black-headed snake, golden eagle, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk and western bluebird.



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Phacelia Novenmillensis
- Existing Water Development
- Proposed Water Development
- Prescribed Burn Area

SACATAR MEADOWS WSA

CA-010-027

Existing Resources

MAP 30

The WSA lies within the Monache-Walker Pass National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area (NCLWMA) which was established on January 26, 1962, by P.L.O. No. 2594. The NCLWMA was established to promote cooperative management of wildlife resources between the California Department of Fish and Game and the BLM. The agreement is intended to ensure the mule deer habitat within the area remains in Federal ownership. A portion of a migration corridor used by the Monache deer herd passes through the northern and western appendages of the WSA. No crucial or winter habitat occurs within the WSA.

RECREATION

Hunting for deer and small upland game as well as rock hounding are the major recreational activities within the WSA. Recreational ORV use occurs along 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Providing access for camping, hunting, sightseeing, and pinyon nut collecting. Use is considered relatively low and dispersed throughout the WSA with 500 visitor days per year associated with ORV use. Nonmotorized recreation uses such as hiking and primitive camping within the WSA account for less than 300 visitor days per year. Motorized recreation use in the WSA has been designated as limited to existing routes of travel.

Visual resources within the WSA are prescribed to be managed under Visual Resource Management Classes III and IV.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This area lies within the ethnographic territory of the Tubatulabal Indian Tribe. The eastern periphery of the WSA was also utilized by the Panamint Shoshone. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known. The primary prehistoric use is projected to have been pinyon nut collecting. Additionally, a major trade route crosses the WSA from Sacatar Canyon over the crest of the Sierra Nevada to Little Lake Canyon east of the WSA. Cultural sensitivity for the unit ranges from moderate to high.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

Pinyon pine and western juniper cover a majority of the WSA, however, interest and demand for both fuelwood and pinyon nuts is considered low. The WSA generally receives very little if any use for these activities on a regular basis.

LANDS

The WSA contains a 200-acre private inholding located in Sec. 2, T. 23 S., R. 36 E., MDM.

There is no legal access currently available to the WSA. Visitors to the area use the Sacatar Canyon Road from the west or another primitive vehicle route from the south. Both of these access routes cross private lands and

are not public routes. Closure of these routes by the owner could occur at any time.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The WSA generally has a low potential for mineral occurrence. A moderate potential for uranium does exist in the southern portion of the WSA. Based on a technical report prepared by the Great Basin GEM Joint Venture for the BLM, these deposits, although not thoroughly explored, are expected to be small.

Additionally, the rugged terrain, remote location, and difficult access indicate a low to very low development potential especially when considered with market conditions. There are no mining claims known to exist in the WSA. Historically, mining has been infrequent in the region. The GEM report indicates two uranium operations with small-scale production in the early 1900s were located somewhere near the southern border of the WSA. However, there is little information to confirm the exact locations and no field survey has been done. There has been no recent exploration or development of any mineral resources within the WSA. No development of mineral resources within the WSA is anticipated in the foreseeable future.

Geologic indications result in a zero potential for oil and gas. The geologic environment of the Sierra Nevada batholith provides no source material for generation of hydrocarbons and no reservoir rock for accumulation of hydrocarbons. The structural characteristics of the batholith in the Sacatar area do not favor geothermal systems.

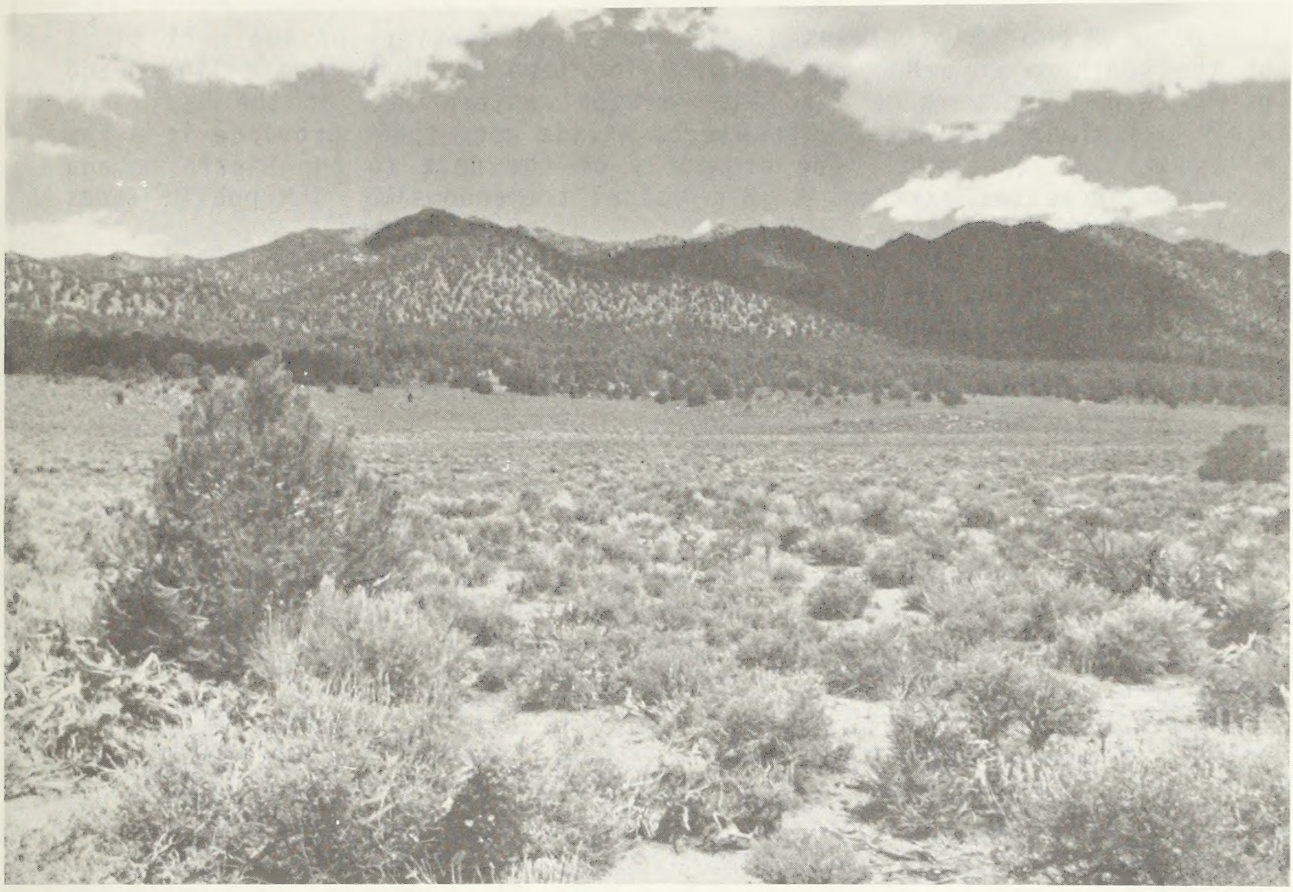


Photo 1 - Sacatar Meadows WSA

CERRO GORDO WSA
(CA-010-055)

The Cerro Gordo WSA contains 16,102 acres and consists of the west slope of the southern Inyo Mountain range. The Inyo Mountains are a linear and narrow high desert range that lies at the western edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province. The Sierra Nevada geomorphic province is a few miles west of the unit. The proximity of the unit to the Sierra Nevada province increases external scenic values tremendously. BLM public lands surround the entire WSA.

Mixed desert shrubs occupy the lower and mid-level slopes. The area is a vegetative ecotone containing Mojave Desert flora and Great Basin flora. Vegetation is sparse in the lower elevations and the southern end of the unit. The higher elevations contain a uniform stand of Pinyon-juniper associations with a shrub understory.

The unit consists of steep, rugged mountainside terrain which rises to a ridgeline with peaks ranging to 9,400 feet. Steep canyon drainages transect the area. The mountainous landform towers above the Owens and Saline Valleys, providing scenic panoramas which include the Sierra Nevada and Panamint mountain ranges. The area's wilderness values are considered to be high; rich in scenic and historical values.

(See Map 31, p. 3-9.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

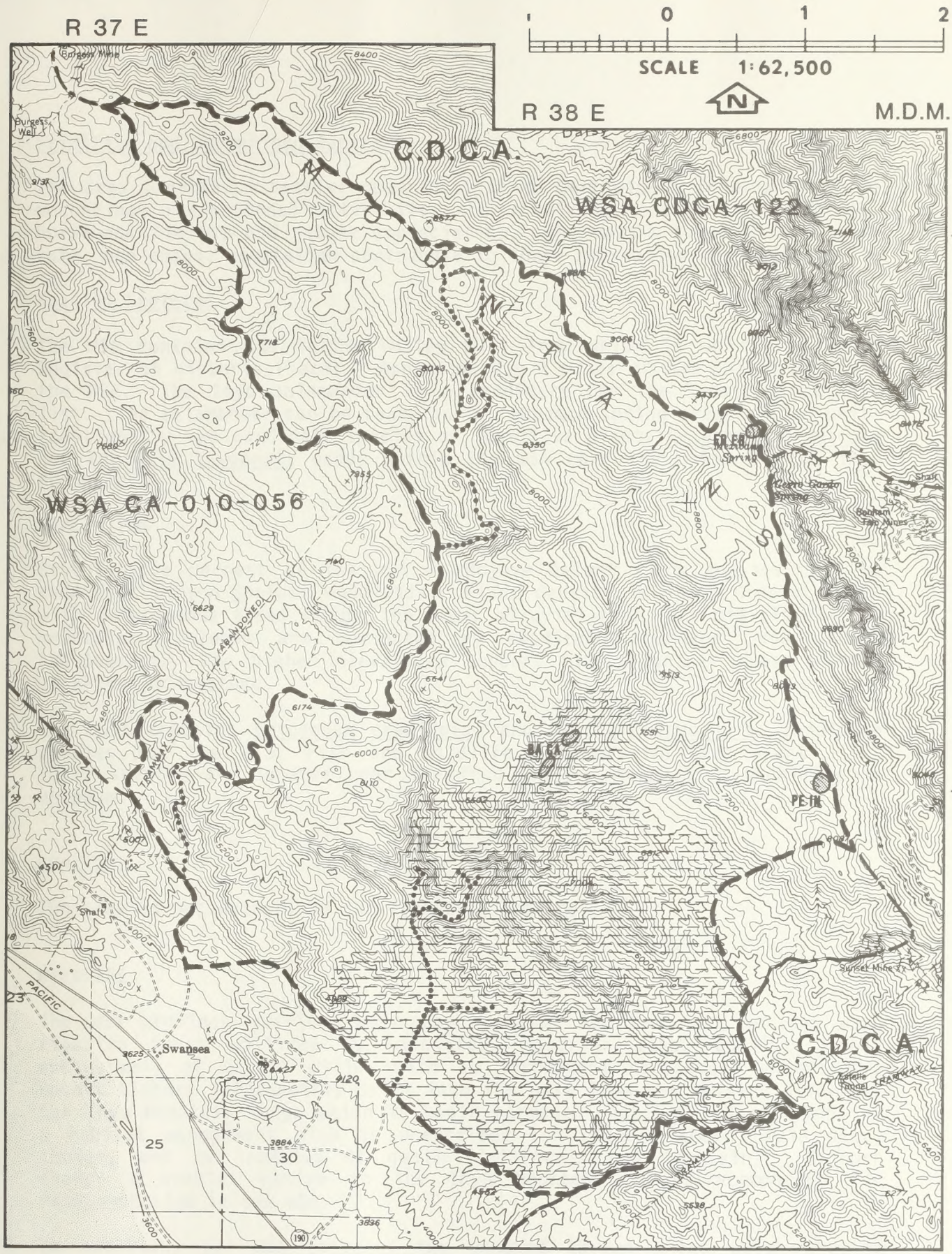
Naturalness

The Cerro Gordo WSA generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with human influences unnoticeable for a major part of the WSA. Numerous interior canyon drainages provide illustrative examples of land that has retained its natural character.

Most of the existing imprints in the Cerro Gordo WSA consist of approximately 10 miles of rugged and primitive jeep routes located in the southwest and northwest sections of the WSA. In addition, the Saline Valley Salt Tram (a historical value), and some inactive mining areas are located in the WSA. These features are substantially unnoticeable and minor in the WSA as a whole due to the unit's highly variable topography and size.

Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are extensively available throughout the WSA primarily because of topographic variations. Pinyon-juniper stands also provide vegetative screening at the higher elevations. In addition, the WSA's rugged and desolate nature enhances opportunities for solitude.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Primitive Vehicle Route

Concentration of Mining Claims

BA CA — Inyo Mountain Salamander

ER ER — Eriogonum eremicola

PE IN — Perityle inyoensis

CERRO GORDO WSA

CA-010-055

Existing Resources

MAP 31

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The area provides extensive opportunities to participate in primitive and unconfined recreational activities such as hiking, backpacking, hunting, horseback riding, and nature appreciation. The unit's size, diverse terrain, and sparse vegetation contribute to these recreation opportunities.

Special Features

The WSA contains the Saline Valley Salt Tram which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Approximately 3 miles of the Salt Tram is in the WSA. The Inyo salamander is a candidate for the sensitive species list. The salamander can be found in two unnamed spring areas of the unit. Additionally two candidate species of sensitive plants Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis occur within the WSA near the crest of the Inyo Mountains.

VEGETATION

Seventy-five percent of the WSA is Mojave Desert scrub species and the remainder pinyon-juniper woodlands. Plant density is low. Creosote bush with some Joshua trees occupy the lower alluvial fans; the mid-elevational mountainous slopes are dominated by shadscale, budsage, and desert needlegrass. The higher elevations support pinyon-juniper trees with a sagebrush understory.

The unit contains Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis, candidate species for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sensitive plant list. These species are located near the Inyo Crest. Population stability is unknown.

GRAZING

The area is not authorized for livestock grazing.

WILDLIFE

The WSA provides yearlong mule deer habitat and has four springs with riparian zones utilized by wildlife. Riparian zones consist almost exclusively of desert willow with an infrequent herbaceous understory. Desert bighorn infrequently drift into the unit from the eastern slopes of the Inyo Mountain range which is their permanent habitat. Development of a habitat management plan is prescribed for bighorn sheep, mule deer, chukar, and two species of quail (California and mountain). Bighorn sheep, a species native to the Inyo Mountains, are recommended for reintroduction in the WSA.

In addition, the WSA contains two unnamed spring areas which provide habitat for the Inyo Mountain salamander. The salamander is an endemic species unique to the Inyo Mountains only. It is currently a candidate for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Rare, Threatened or Endangered" species list.

RECREATION

Approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes exist in the WSA. These routes are used for sightseeing and motorized recreational access. Use in the area is low and of a dispersed nature. It is estimated that there are 1,000 visitor days per year in the WSA; of these visitor days 900 are related to vehicle use. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. Motor vehicle use in this WSA was designated in 1983 as limited to designated or existing routes and trails. Visual resources in the unit are prescribed to be managed under a Visual Resource Management Class III.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The unit contains the abandoned Saline Valley Salt Tram, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Approximately 3 miles is located in the WSA. Construction of the Salt Tram began in 1911. It was built to carry salt (99% pure) from Saline Valley over the Inyo Mountains into Owens Valley. It is the steepest tramway in the United States. Development of interpretive facilities is proposed for the Salt Tram. Remnants of past Cerro Gordo mining activity are located outside the WSA near the south edge of the unit. Cerro Gordo, a silver boom town of the 1860s and 1870s, is known for hitting one of the biggest silver strikes in California.

This WSA falls within the ethnographic territory of the Lone Pine Paiute Indian Tribe. Pinyon nut gathering is currently known to occur on the east slope of the Inyos, and may occur within this unit.

Approximately 10% of the area has been surveyed for prehistoric cultural values. The cultural sensitivity of the unit is high. Most sites seem to reflect a hunting based economy with small temporary campsites and lithic scatters. Prehistoric pinyon collection sites also are present. Sites appear to be clustered on ridgetops within the pinyon zone.

LANDS

Portions of the WSA are withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931, and under E.O. 6206. Both withdrawals restrict disposal of these public lands. In addition, non-metalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 6206. All other watershed-related land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The unit generally has no potential for metallic minerals with small areas of low and high potential in the northern portion of the WSA. Mineral development potential for metallic minerals would be low to moderate, at best, due to poor accessibility and narrow, irregular veins. Cerro Gordo mining activity ceased in the 1870s, the result of depleted silver. There is low to moderate potential for uranium and no potential for thorium. Mineral development potential for uranium would be low due to present market conditions and difficult access. No potential for oil and gas

exists. Predominantly low potential exists for geothermal with a small area of high potential in the southwest corner; development potential is low. Nonmetallic mineral potential in the WSA is mostly low with the east quarter rated as moderate. Nonmetallics such as dolomite, limestone, and beryl are in abundance outside the WSA. Development potential for nonmetallic minerals would be low due to difficulty of access and distance to market. The WSA has approximately 47 unpatented mining claims in the south half and north-central portions.

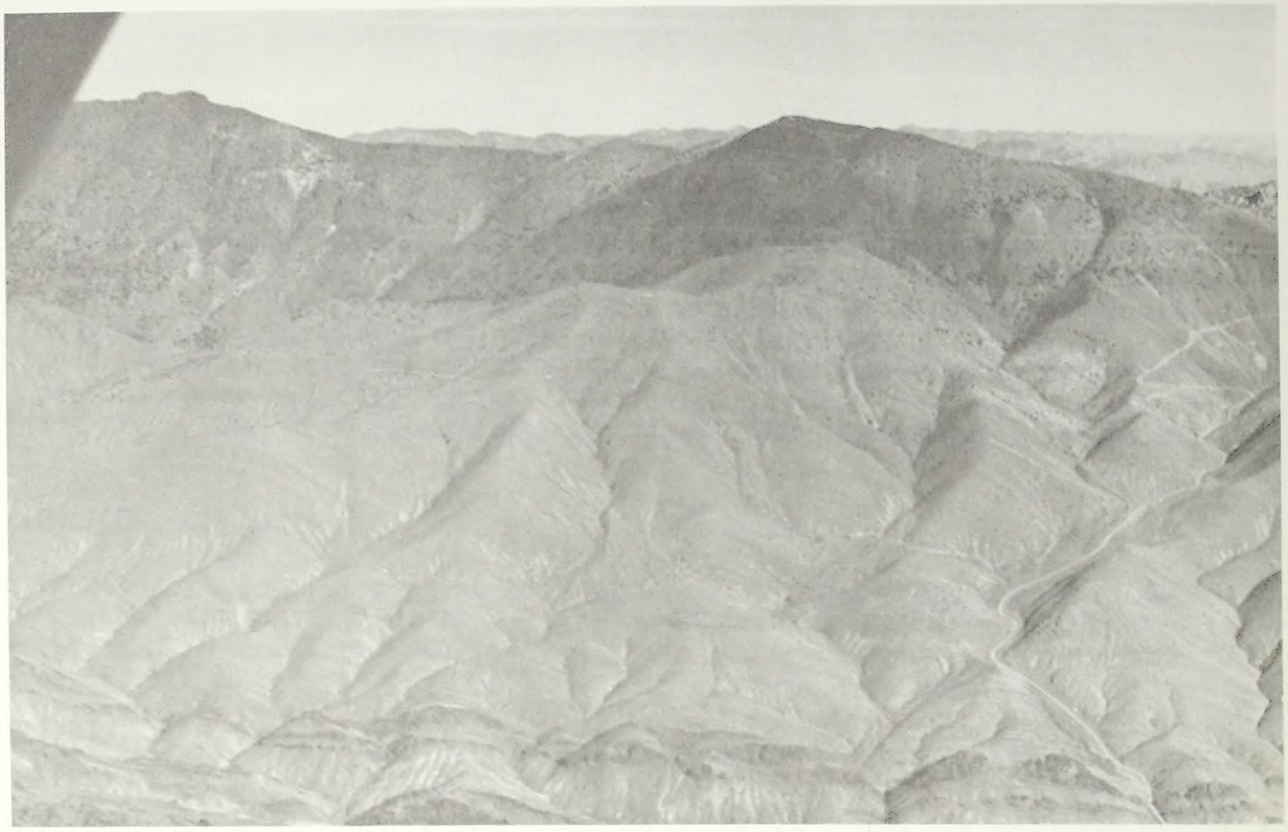


Photo 2 - Cerro Gordo WSA

Photo 3 - Remnants of Saline Valley Salt Train in the Cerro Gordo WSA

SOUTHERN INYO WSA
(CA-010-056)

The Southern Inyo WSA contains 36,600 acres and includes the west slope of the southern and central Inyo Mountain range. The mountain range occupies the west margin of the Basin and Range geomorphic province. The adjoining Sierra Nevada geomorphic province, a few miles west of the unit, imparts a striking visual contrast to the high desert scenery. BLM public lands surround the majority of the unit. The Inyo National Forest is contiguous to the north. A small private inholding is located in the WSA.

Mixed desert shrubs occupy the lower and mid-level slopes. Vegetation is sparse in the lower foothills; the higher elevations are blanketed with Pinyon-juniper stands with a sagebrush understory.

This WSA consists of extremely rugged and steep mountainous terrain which slopes down toward Owens Valley. Summit elevations range to 11,000 feet. Mt. Inyo and Keynot Peaks slightly exceed the 11,000 foot elevation. Numerous interior drainages exist within the area. The mountainous landform towers above the Owens and Saline Valleys, providing scenic panoramas that also include the Sierra Nevada and Panamint mountain ranges.

The highly eroded, very steep northern portion of the unit supports little vegetation, but displays dramatic combinations of colors, hues, and erosional patterns. During the twilight hours, the brilliant colors that reflect off the range mesmerize area visitors. The area's wilderness values are considered to be high; rich in scenic, botanical, and historical values.

The area's east boundary adjoins CDCA WSA 122 which has been preliminarily recommended as suitable for wilderness designation in the California Desert Plan. The area's north boundary adjoins the Inyo National Forest's Paiute roadless area. This area has been recommended for wilderness in the Draft Inyo Forest Plan.

(See Map 32, p. 3-17.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The Southern Inyo WSA has retained its overall naturalness. It has been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man generally unnoticeable within the rugged confines of this WSA. The self-protective nature of the steep, foreboding canyons are a testimonial to the area's naturalness.

The signs of human activity include 15 miles of rugged and primitive vehicle routes which are mostly located along the western periphery of the WSA, the abandoned Saline Valley Salt Tram (a historical value), some inactive mine areas, and several old mining trails. The cumulative effect of these influences on naturalness is very low due to the unit's primitive character and large size.

Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are abundant in the Southern Inyo WSA. Diverse terrain which includes remote canyons and a long jagged mountain ridge in addition to its large size and vegetative screening at higher elevations are elements that enhance visitors' opportunities to find isolation in the WSA. Panoramic vistas of the Sierra Nevada, Saline Valley, and the Panamint Mountain range heighten one's sense of seclusion.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Visitors to this WSA can easily find outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The WSA's size, physical features, exhilarating ridgetop viewsheds, old mining trails, unique flora and fauna, and historical features are elements which attract a variety of visitors. These visitors participate in hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, nature appreciation, historical sightseeing, scenic photography, and other activities.

Special Features

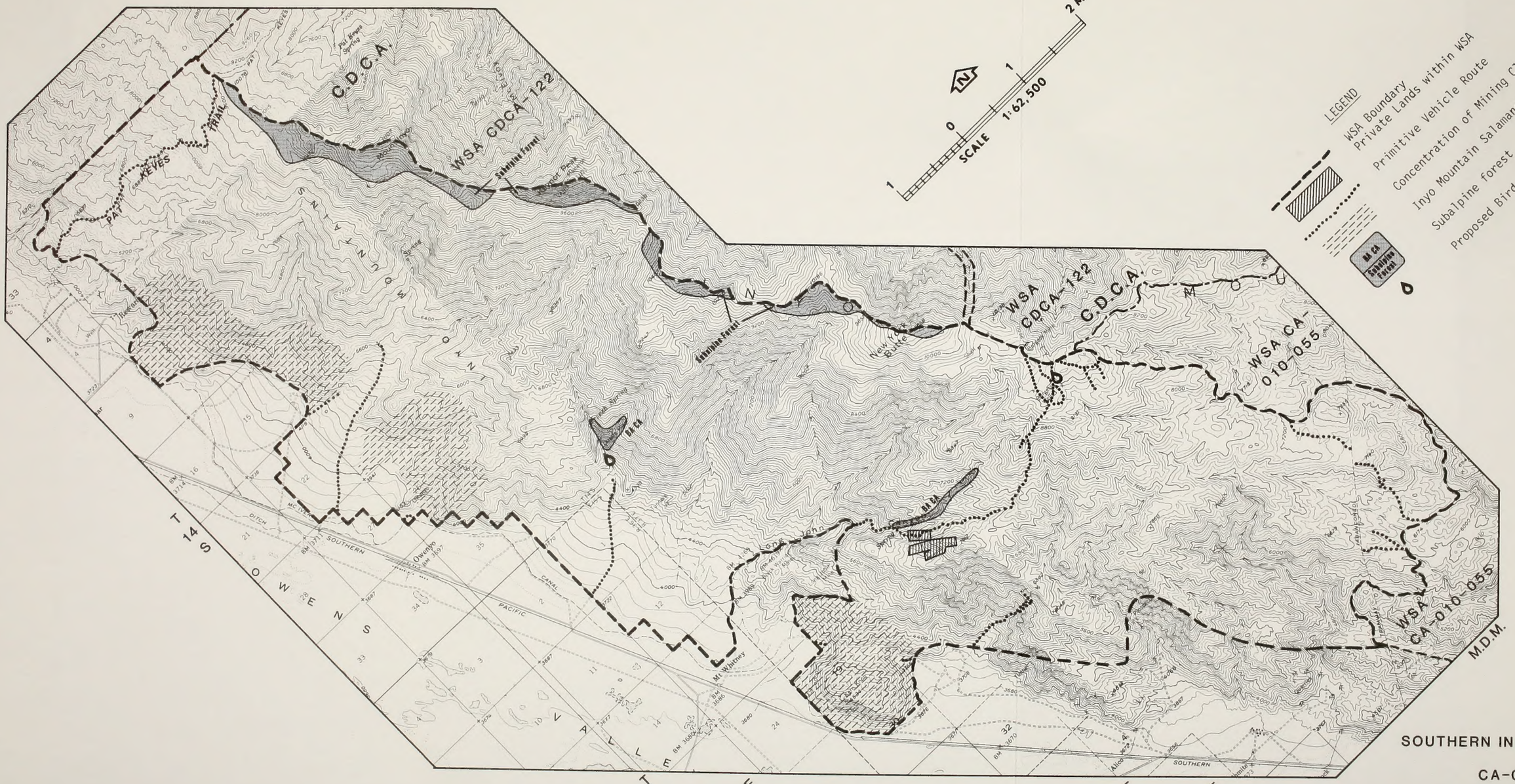
The WSA contains numerous special features of noteworthy interest. These include the Saline Valley Salt Tram which is on the National Register of Historic Places, stands of bristlecone pine trees which are the world's oldest living plants, and the Pat Keyes Trail which is a historic mining trail dating back to the late 19th century. The Inyo salamander can be found in various canyons of the unit. The salamander is a candidate for the sensitive species list. In addition, prairie falcon nesting sites are located in the Long John Canyon area and a nearby unnamed canyon.

VEGETATION

Eighty percent of the WSA is Mojave Desert scrub and the remainder is pinyon-juniper woodland. Plant density is low. Creosote bush occupies the lower alluvial fans, and the mid-elevational mountainous slopes are dominated by shadscale, big sage, and desert needlegrass. The higher elevations support pinyon-juniper woodlands.

The WSA has a subalpine forest which contains bristlecone pine (Pinus aristata) and limber pine (Pinus flexilis). This forest is considered a unique plant assemblage and carries BLM protection. This unique forest assemblage lies along 9 miles of the Inyo Crest and is located in a highly remote and inaccessible area. Forest trend is considered stable. Those public lands with bristlecone pine have been recommended for evaluation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

There are no listed or candidate species within the WSA for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species List.



SOUTHERN INYO WSA

CA-010-056

Existing Resources

MAP 32

GRAZING

The WSA is not authorized for livestock grazing.

WILDLIFE

The WSA provides yearlong mule deer habitat and has ten springs with riparian zones which are utilized by wildlife. Riparian zones consist almost exclusively of desert willow with an infrequent herbaceous understory. Four of these springs provide chukar habitat. Two canyons are raptor nesting sites. A prairie falcon nest is located in Long John Canyon. Desert bighorn infrequently drift into the unit from the eastern slopes of the Inyo Mountain range which is their permanent habitat. Two wildlife guzzler installations have been proposed in this unit to benefit mule deer, quail, and chukar. Development of a habitat management plan is prescribed for bighorn sheep, mule deer, chukar, and two species of quail (California and mountain). Bighorn sheep, a native species of the Inyo Mountains, are recommended for reintroduction in the WSA.

In addition, the WSA contains habitat (Long John Canyon and French Spring Canyon) for the Inyo Mountain salamander. The salamander is an endemic species unique to the Inyo Mountains only. It is currently a candidate for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's "Rare, Threatened or Endangered" species list.

RECREATION

Approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes are located in the WSA--used mostly for sightseeing, hunting and camping. The area is also popular for backpacking and hiking. The area contains old mining trails used for hiking and backpacking. These include the Pat Keyes Historic Mining Trail, the Long John Canyon Trail, the Forgotten Pass Trail, and the Union Wash Trail. It is estimated that there are 1,200 visitor days per year in the WSA. Of these visitor days, 1,000 are related to vehicle use. At least 200 visits occur as a result of hiking and backpacking activities. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. Visitor use in the unit is primarily of a dispersed nature. Motor vehicle use in the WSA was designated in 1983 as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. Visual resources in the unit are prescribed to be managed under a Visual Resource Management Class III.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The WSA contains the abandoned Saline Valley Salt Tram (approximately 3¼ miles), which is on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Pat Keyes Historic Mining Trail (approximately 6 miles) is located in the unit. The construction of the Salt Tram began in 1911 to carry salt (99% pure) from Saline Valley over the Inyo Mountains and into Owens Valley. It is the steepest tramway in the United States. The Pat Keyes Trail was built between 1890 and 1910 to serve mines on the Inyo Crest. Development of interpretive facilities is proposed for both.

This unit lies within the ethnographic territory of the Lone Pine Paiute Indian Tribe. Pinyon nut collection currently occurs outside the WSA on the east slope of the Inyos, and may also occur in this unit as a very limited casual use due to the inaccessibility of the pinyon-juniper woodlands within the higher elevations.

Approximately 5% of this area has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. The sensitivity of this unit is high. The primary site types are lithic scatters and small temporary campsites indicative of a hunting-based economy. Sites appear to be clustered on the ridgetops within the pinyon zone.

LANDS

Portions of the WSA are withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931, and under E.O. 6206. Both withdrawals restrict disposal of these public lands. In addition, non-metalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 6206. All other watershed related land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. One patented mining claim (72 acres) is located near Long John Canyon and is currently being used by the owner. A vehicle route leads to the mining claim and is used approximately four times per year by the landowner.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The unit contains no to low potential for metallic minerals in most of the WSA with small areas of moderate and high potential in the southern portion of the WSA. Mineral development potential for metallic minerals would be low to moderate, at best, due to poor accessibility and the nature of the deposits. Low to moderate potential exists for uranium with no potential for thorium. Uranium development potential would be low due to the difficulty of vehicular access. There is no potential for oil and gas. Primarily low potential for geothermal exists with areas of moderate potential along the west edge; development potential is low. Nonmetallic mineral potential is mostly low with the southwest portion rated as moderate (dolomite and limestone). Beryl potential is high at a location in the center of the WSA. No known claims or activity occur in this area. Beryl potential is moderate in the Kern Knob area. Development potential of all nonmetallics would be low due to market distance and the difficulty of access. Nonmetallics such as dolomite, limestone and beryl are abundantly available outside the WSA. The WSA has approximately 170 unpatented mining claims; the majority are located in the northwest quarter of the WSA.

Photo 4 - Southern Inyo WSA with Mt. Keynot in background

Photo 5 - Southern Inyo WSA

INDEPENDENCE CREEK
(CA-010-057)

The Independence Creek WSA consists of 6,250 acres in the Owens Valley. It includes much of the broad, rocky alluvial apron at the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The WSA is bounded on the north and south by Bureau lands, and on the east by private lands. The Inyo National Forest is contiguous to the west.

Mixed desert shrubs occupy a majority of the WSA. George Creek, a perennial stream, is located in the northern end of the WSA.

(See Map 33, p. 3-23.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The Independence Creek WSA has retained its overall naturalness. Man-made imprints consist of primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 2 miles. The vehicle routes are substantially unnoticeable because of the dense vegetation extending from the edge of the route. In addition, there is a fenceline on the WSA as well as water-spreading and diversion channels. Overall the unit's large size makes these improvements imperceptible except on a localized basis.

Solitude

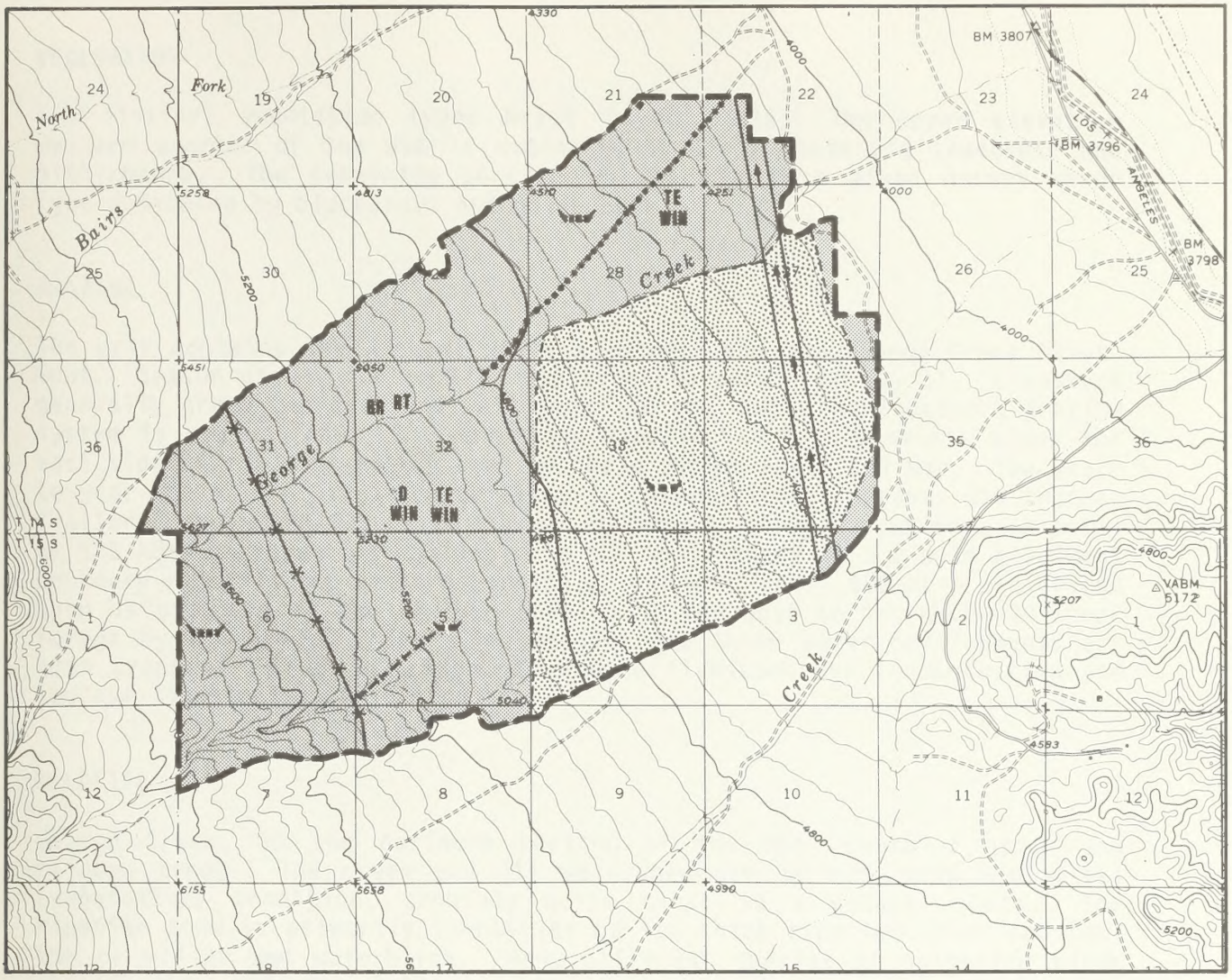
The large size of this WSA contributes to the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude. There is adequate room to roam throughout the WSA without feeling the presence of man's influence. However, outside influences of U.S. Highway 395 and other cultural features are visible from within the WSA, primarily along the WSA's western periphery.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA provides opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. These opportunities include trout fishing, hiking, hunting, camping, and other activities. Visual amenities are minimal due to uniformity of landform character within the WSA. However, there are scenic views from within the WSA of the Inyo Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas.

Special Features

The unit contains several features of noteworthy significance. It contains George Creek and associated riparian habitat which is an essential micro-environment for local flora and fauna who rely on the water source to exist within the desert ecosystem of Owens Valley. In addition, the WSA contains habitat for the tule elk and crucial winter habitat for mule deer.



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- BR — Brown Trout Population
- RT — Rainbow Trout Population
- D WIN — Deer Wintering Habitat
- TE WIN — Tule Elk Wintering Habitat
- Prescribed Burn and Habitat
- Existing Fenceline
- Proposed Water Development
- Proposed Pipeline and Trough
- Livestock Driveway

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

INDEPENDENCE CREEK WSA

CA-010-057

Existing Resources

MAP 33

VEGETATION

Two distinct vegetation types exist in this WSA. The upper elevation western quarter of the WSA is dominated by Great Basin big sagebrush and bitterbrush. The remaining portion of the WSA is a mixed desert shrub type dominated by blackbrush and goldenbush.

GRAZING

The unit contains the Alabama Hills Allotment and the George Creek Allotment. Season of use for cattle runs from February 1 to May 31. Livestock generally graze the east and west sides of the WSA. The livestock grazing system is season long. A 3-mile-long livestock driveway exists along the east side of the WSA--mostly used by sheep during April and May. The year-to-year use of the livestock driveway is intermittent. Herders use trucks, trailers, and water trucks to support livestock drive operations. A total of 523 AUMs of forage is available in the WSA. There is a 2-mile allotment boundary fence in the western portion of the WSA. An 1,800-acre prescribed burn is proposed in the eastern portion of the unit to increase livestock forage by 100 AUMs. A one-mile pipeline and three water developments are also proposed for construction, to reduce livestock use concentration and improve livestock distribution.

WILDLIFE

George Creek, in the northern portion of the WSA, contains brown and rainbow trout. The creek and its watershed are in very good ecological (vegetative) condition, probably quite close to a natural state. The riparian zone is primarily identified by its thick riparian cover consisting of willow and waterbirch. Many different species of passerine birds utilize the riparian habitat. An aquatic habitat management plan is prescribed for George Creek to maintain existing habitat and water quality. The western half of the WSA is Whitney tule elk habitat and is crucial winter habitat for the Goodale mule deer herd. A cooperative management plan for the Goodale mule deer herd will be developed with the Inyo National Forest. A cooperative management plan has been developed and implemented by the California Department of Fish and Game, the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and the Bureau for all distinct herds of tule elk in the Owens Valley.

RECREATION

Some motorized recreation access, fishing, and hunting are occurring in the WSA. Use is low and dispersed. It is estimated that there are 500 visitor days per year in the WSA--all related to vehicle use. Brush thinning along George Creek is proposed to improve angler access. Motor vehicle use in this area was designated in 1983 as limited to existing routes and trails. There is a primitive vehicle route (approximately 2 miles) in the northeastern portion of the WSA. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. Management of visual resources for the WSA is prescribed as Visual Resource Management Class III.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This unit lies in the ethnographic territory of Lone Pine Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known.

Approximately 5% of the unit has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values, and the predicted cultural sensitivity of the area is high. Most sites lying within the unit represent temporary camps, but the possibility exists for more permanent camps near the one perennial stream which occurs in the WSA.

LANDS

A power transmission line right-of-way was granted to the City of Los Angeles in 1964. The powerline was actually constructed outside the WSA on City owned land. The Bureau has requested that the City relinquish the right-of-way. Unauthorized water-spreading and diversion channels, constructed by the City of Los Angeles for watershed protection, exist in the WSA. The channels divert runoff from the mountains, controlling floods and allowing recharge of the ground water aquifer. All public lands in the WSA are withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931. This withdrawal restricts disposal of these public lands. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau.

MINERALS ENERGY

The unit has low potential for metallic minerals. There is low potential for uranium, thorium, and geothermal. Mineral development potential for metallic minerals uranium, thorium, and geothermal are very low to low. There is moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals. Nonmetallic minerals such as sand and gravel have low development potential due to the unknown quality of this material in the WSA as well as the ample availability of sand and gravel outside the WSA. There is no potential for oil and gas. Two inactive unpatented mining claims are in the northwest corner of the WSA.

Photo 6 - Independence Creek WSA

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA
(CA-010-062)

The Crater Mountain WSA contains 6,760 acres of BLM public land and 500 acres of adjoining Inyo National Forest land. BLM lands surround the majority of the unit. Inyo National Forest land is located to the west. Small parcels of nonpublic land adjoin portions of the WSA's northeast and northwest boundaries.

The WSA is uniformly blanketed with mixed desert shrubs below the volcanic cinder cone. Plant density is low to moderate. The primary landform feature of the WSA is Crater Mountain, a volcanic cinder cone and associated basaltic lava flows. The WSA is located on alluvial deposition at the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. The unit straddles the common edges of the Basin and Range geomorphic province and the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province.

Lack of soil development on the lava peak has greatly limited the vegetation, creating a stark contrast between the volcanic landform and its surroundings, including the Owens Valley and the High Sierra. The mountain rises more than 2,000 feet above the Owens Valley floor. It is considered one of the largest volcanoes in the region.

(See Map 34, p. 3-29.)

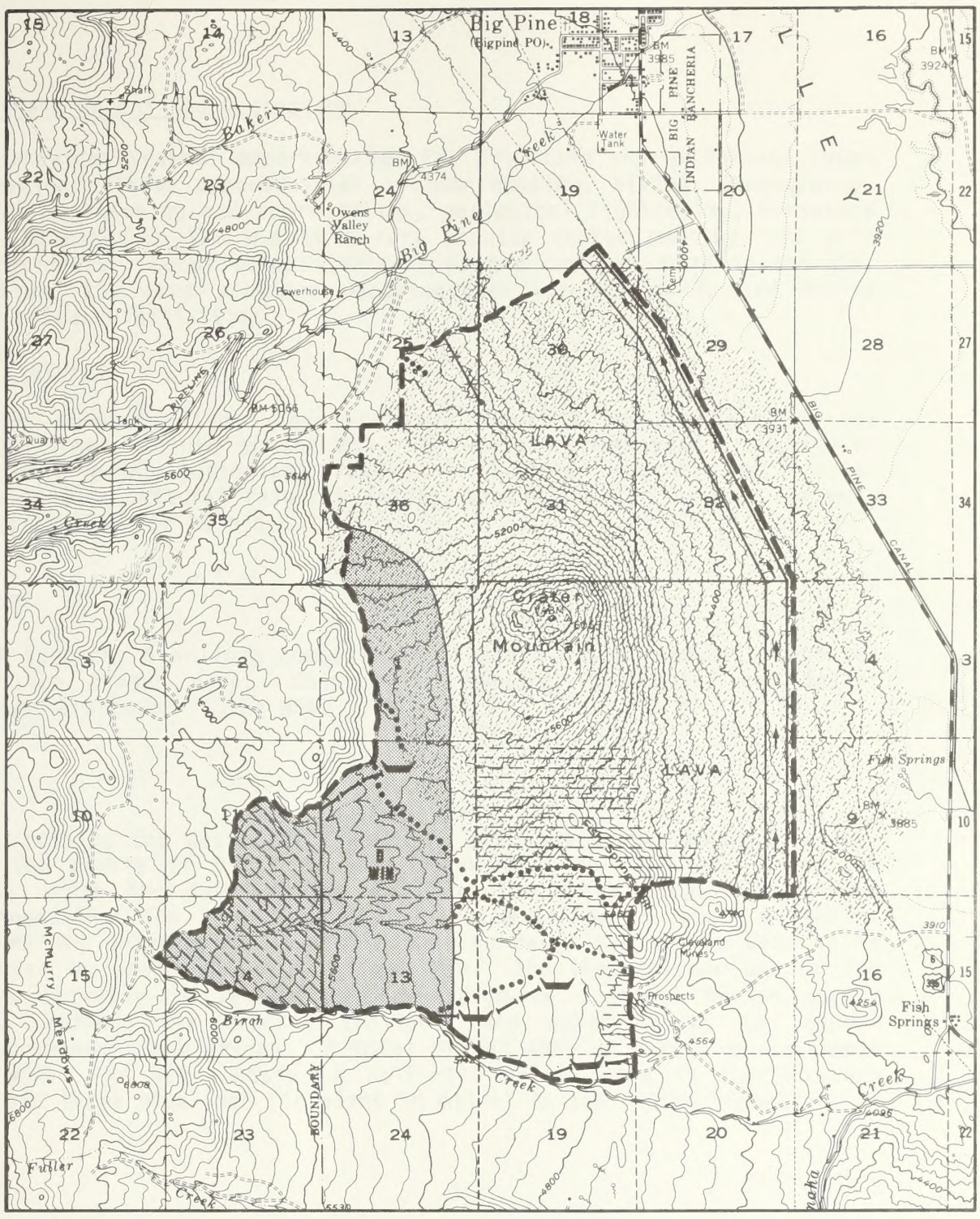
WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The Crater Mountain WSA has maintained its natural character. A few man-made features do exist in the unit but are considered visually insignificant amid the lava rubble that pervades the WSA. These features include approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes, a drift fence, pipeline, earth-tone painted livestock water troughs, and isolated inactive mining claims. The rugged volcanic features of the crater and associated lava flows in the WSA discourage most forms of development activity. An electric transmission line parallels the eastern boundary just outside the WSA.

Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are available within the WSA. The unit's size and its jagged, bouldery terrain provide a screening effect which enhances one's opportunity to find isolation. However, the unit's rounded, open landform and a lack of sufficient vegetation limits opportunities for solitude on the east and north aspects of the WSA. Solitude in the eastern portion of the WSA is somewhat degraded by the presence of U.S. Highway 395 located one-half to one mile outside the WSA.



N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Concentration of Mining Claims
- Deer Wintering Habitat
- Existing Fenceline
- Existing Pipeline and Trough
- Livestock Driveway

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA

CA-010-062

Existing Resources

MAP 34

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA provides several opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. These opportunities include hunting, hiking, photography, historical sightseeing and appreciation, geological sightseeing, horseback riding, and others. The WSA is a very popular chukar hunting area with valley residents. Local school field trips are commonly held in the WSA. In addition, the area provides opportunities for scientific and Native American research activities.

Special Features

The Crater Mountain cinder cone and lava flows is the dominant and the most significant feature of the WSA. It contains high scenic quality as well as intriguing geological values. Additional features of special interest include cultural resource values, crucial winter habitat for mule deer, and habitat for tule elk.

VEGETATION

This WSA supports a uniform composition of mixed desert shrubs around the base of the cinder cone. Goldenbush, ephedra, buckwheat, and desert needlegrass are found in the WSA.

GRAZING

The WSA contains the West Crater Mountain and East Crater Mountain Allotments. The season of use runs from December 1 to June 30. Livestock uniformly graze the outer flanks avoiding the rocky slopes which form Crater Mountain. The livestock grazing system is season long. A 4-mile-long livestock driveway is located along the east side of the WSA; it is mostly used by sheep during April and May. The year-to-year use of the livestock driveway is intermittent depending on seasonal forage availability. Herders use trucks, trailers, and water trucks to support livestock movement operations. A total of 293 AUMs of forage is available in the WSA. The WSA contains a half-mile drift fence in the northern portion and three pipelines (totaling 1¼ miles) in the southern portion.

WILDLIFE

The WSA contains crucial winter habitat in the western portion for the Goodale mule deer herd as well as chukar habitat. The WSA is one of the more popular chukar hunting areas in the Owens Valley. A chukar water facility is proposed for construction in the south end of the unit. Tule elk of the Tinemaha herd utilize the WSA intermittently during fall and winter months. A cooperative management plan for the Goodale mule deer herd is prescribed for development with the Inyo National Forest.

RECREATION

The WSA is used extensively by Owens Valley residents. Motorized access activities consist of sightseeing especially for geological values such as lava tube exploration, as well as sightseeing of cultural values. Local school groups conduct field trips to the area. Chukar hunting is very popular in the WSA. It is estimated that there are 900 visitor days per year in the WSA. Of these visitor days, 675 are related to vehicle use. Motor vehicle use for this area was designated in 1983 as limited to existing routes and trails. There are approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes in the southwest portion. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. Visual resources of the WSA are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II (northeast half) and Class III (southwest half).

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This WSA lies within the ethnographic territory of the Big Pine Paiute Indian Tribe. The ethnographic village at Big Pine (tovowahamatu--natural mound place) is probably named after Crater Mountain. The Big Pine band may consider this unit as a sacred area.

Approximately 8% of this WSA has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. Cultural sensitivity appears to be high. An intensive inventory of cultural resources has been prescribed for this unit. Small temporary hunting camps, seed collecting and processing sites occur throughout the unit. Petroglyph sites also are present in portions of the WSA.

LANDS

One 40-acre power site reserve is located in the WSA. The reserve has been recommended for revocation due to lack of activity and interest. The entire WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931. This withdrawal restricts disposal of these public lands. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. The WSA includes 500 acres of Inyo National Forest lands in the southwest corner.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The WSA contains moderate potential for occurrence of geothermal resources with development potential considered low due to the lack of a readily identifiable geothermal resource and a lack of interest by related industry. There is low potential for nonmetallic minerals, uranium, and thorium. There is no potential for oil and gas. There is predominantly a low potential for metallic minerals with a small area in the south having a moderate potential for gold with a moderate development potential. Mineral development potential for uranium, thorium, nonmetallic and metallic minerals is low. Fifty-nine unpatented mining claims exist in the WSA--six millsites in the northern portion and fifty-three lode placer millsite claims in the southern portion.

Environment

Photo 7 - Crater Mountain WSA

SYMMES CREEK
(CA-010-064)

The Symmes Creek WSA contains 7,700 acres of BLM land and 430 acres of adjacent Inyo National Forest land. It includes much of the broad, rocky alluvial apron at the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The WSA is bounded on the north and south by BLM land and on the west by Inyo National Forest. Private lands adjoin the eastern boundary of the WSA. A 640-acre private inholding is located in the northern portion of the WSA. The northern and southern portions of the WSA are traversed by two perennial creeks--Symmes Creek and Shepherd Creek.

The unit is uniformly composed of mixed desert shrubs. In 1985, a wildfire destroyed most of the vegetation on 3,520 acres in the WSA. Since then, some of the damaged vegetation has reestablished along the Symmes Creek riparian zone. Up to the present time, vegetation on the remainder of the burn area has failed to reestablish.

(See Map 35, p. 3-35.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

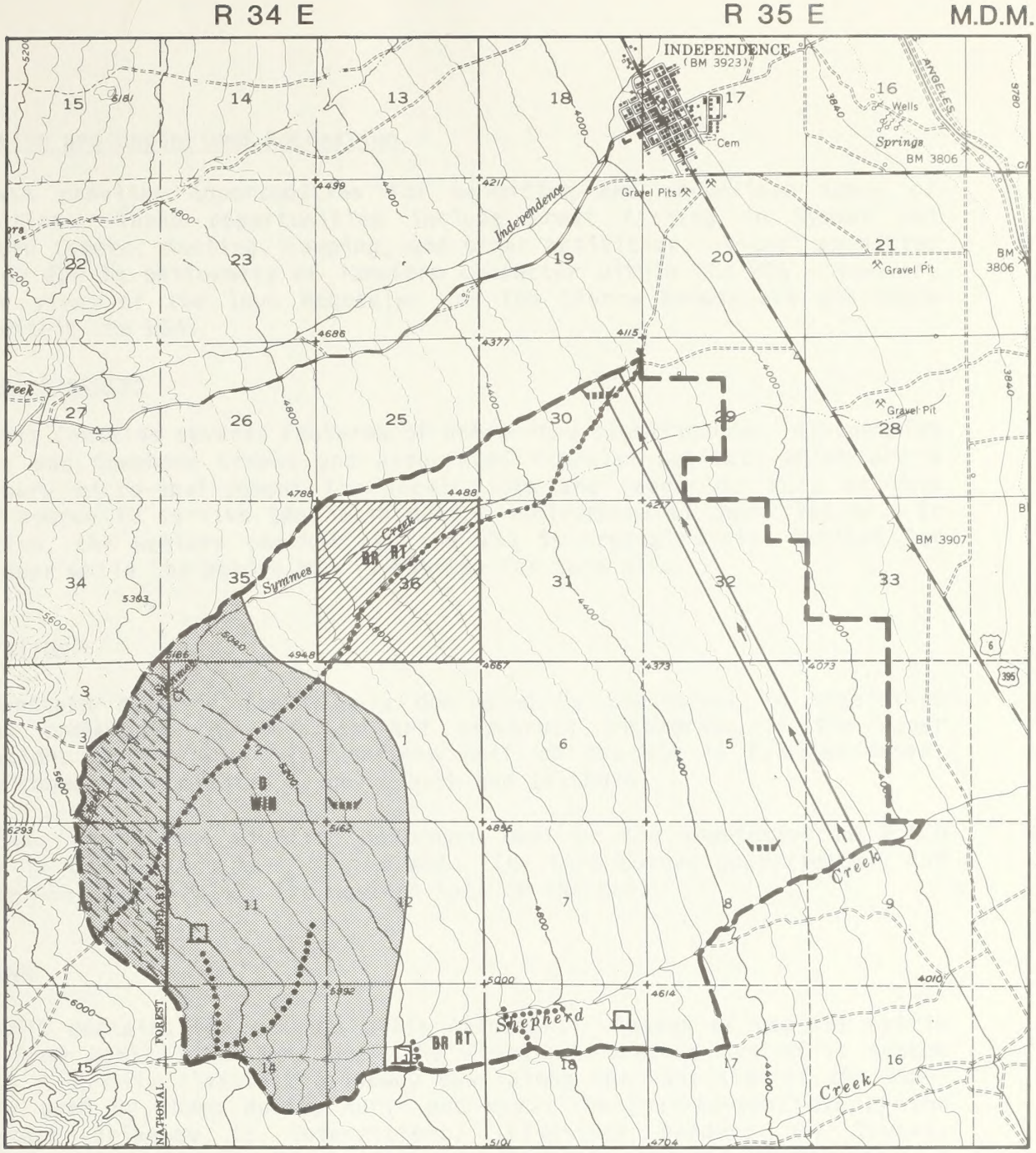
The Symmes Creek WSA contains some evidence of man's works. The unit's size renders these man-made influences to a level that is substantially unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole. However, the biggest alteration to naturalness since the designation of the WSA in 1979 was the intense wildfire that destroyed 3,520 acres of the WSA--primarily in the west half. The fire was precipitated by a lightning strike which was fanned by extremely high and erratic winds. This resulted in total destruction of all plants and animals in the fire's path. In addition, 5 miles of catlines were required to keep the raging fire from spreading to adjacent private land and nearby residences. The catlines were barricaded to prevent vehicle use on these ways. The burned area appears as a charred and blackened moonscape. Rehabilitation was not conducted due to low probability for success.

Man-made imprints that existed prior to the fire include 5 to 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes, three apiary sites, water-spreading and diversion facilities along the eastern portion of the unit, and a cherrystem drainage diversion road in the southwest corner of the WSA. Overall these features are unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole, except on a localized basis.

Solitude

The area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude due to the unit's large size. Although the destruction of all vegetation in the west half of the WSA has limited these opportunities, this charred and barren landscape imparts an eerie feeling of desolation to area visitors. The influences of U.S. Highway 395, located one-half mile east of the WSA, and the cherrystem intrusion somewhat degrade opportunities for solitude.

Environment



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead
- Private Lands within WSA
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- BR — Brown Trout Population
- RT — Rainbow Trout Population
- D WIN — Deer Wintering Habitat
- Proposed Water Development
- Apiary Site
- Livestock Driveway

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

SYMMES CREEK WSA

CA-010-064

Existing Resources

MAP 35

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA provides opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. These opportunities include trout fishing in Symmes and Shepherd Creeks, hunting, camping, and other activities. Visual amenities are low due to uniformity of landform character within the WSA. However, scenic views of the Inyo Mountains and the Sierra Nevada are available from within the WSA.

Special Features

The unit contains several features of noteworthy significance. It contains Symmes and Shepherd Creeks and associated riparian habitats which are a necessary micro-environment for local flora and fauna who rely on this water source to survive the harsh desert environment of Owens Valley. In addition, the western one-half of the WSA is crucial winter habitat for mule deer while the entire WSA is habitat for tule elk.

VEGETATION

The western half of the WSA is dominated by blackbrush, a vegetative climax community. Bitterbrush and sagebrush intergrade at the upper elevations of the WSA. The eastern half of the WSA is a mixed desert shrub community dominated by goldenbush and saltbush.

In 1985, an intense wildfire destroyed most of the vegetation on 3,520 acres in the western half of the WSA. The fire burned approximately 43% of the WSA, mostly along the western half of the unit.

GRAZING

The unit contains the Alabama Hills Allotment. Season of use for cattle runs from April 1 to June 30. The livestock grazing system is season long. A 3½-mile livestock driveway runs along the east side of the WSA--mostly used by sheep during April and May. The year-to-year use of the livestock driveway is intermittent. Livestock herders use trucks, trailers and water trucks to support livestock herding operations. A total of 210 AUMs of forage is available in the WSA. Livestock use within the WSA is low. Proposed range improvements include three water developments and a 3,800-acre prescribed burn in the center of the unit to increase forage production by 211 AUMs. The 1985 wildfire burned all but 280 acres of the area prescribed for the burn. As a result, the prescribed burn would not be implemented.

WILDLIFE

The WSA includes Symmes and Shepherd Creeks which contain brown and rainbow trout, and provide riparian habitat. The riparian habitat consists of willow and birch trees. Fish habitat structures are located in Symmes Creek. The habitat structures are to be evaluated for their effectiveness in improving trout habitat. If not working properly, they

will be removed. The creeks are stocked with trout by California Department of Fish and Game which requires motorized access. These creeks are to be included in a regional habitat management plan for streams between Lone Pine and Big Pine, California. The entire WSA is considered Goodale mule deer habitat with the western half being crucial winter habitat. A cooperative management plan is to be developed for deer herd management between the Inyo National Forest and the Bureau. The WSA also provides habitat for tule elk.

RECREATION

Approximately 600 visitor days of recreation use per year occur in the WSA. Of this total approximately 500 of these visitor days are attributed to motorized recreational access. Fishing activity is most popular and occurring on Symmes and Shepherd Creeks. Symmes Creek receives approximately 100 of the total visits per year. Creeks are stocked with trout. Vehicle use in the WSA is associated with hunting, fishing, and general sightseeing. Motor vehicle use in this area was designated in 1983 as limited to existing routes and trails. A primitive vehicle route provides access to Symmes Creek and bisects the unit (approximately 6 miles). No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. A wildfire in 1985 destroyed much of the WSA's vegetation leaving a large portion of the WSA vulnerable and open to off-road vehicle use. Visual resources of the WSA are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class III.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This WSA lies in the ethnographic territory of the Independence Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known.

Less than 1% of the WSA has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. The predicted cultural sensitivity of the unit is moderate to high. Seed collecting and processing appear to be the predominant economic focus of the area. Most sites lying throughout the unit represent small temporary camps, but the possibility exists for more permanent camps located near perennial water.

LANDS

Three power site reserves are located in the southern portion of the WSA. These power site reserves are inactive and have been recommended for revocation. The entire WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles (under Act of March 4, 1931). The withdrawal restricts disposal of these public lands. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the BLM. The City of Los Angeles also administers a 640-acre inholding in the northern portion of the WSA. A power transmission line right-of-way was granted to the City of Los Angeles in 1964. The powerline was actually constructed outside the WSA on City land. The BLM has requested that the City relinquish the right-of-way. The unit contains unauthorized water-spreading and diversion facilities in the eastern end of the unit, serving the purposes of flood control and ground water recharge. Three apiary sites are in the southern portion of the

WSA. Each apiary site occupies approximately one-quarter acre. Due to spatial requirements which maintain colony stability, few opportunities are available to relocate these apiary sites elsewhere.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The WSA has low potential for metallic minerals, uranium, thorium, and geothermal. Mineral development potentials for metallic minerals (e.g., tungsten), uranium, thorium, and geothermal are very low to low. There is moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals. Nonmetallic minerals such as sand and gravel have low development potential due to the unknown quality of this material in the WSA as well as the ample availability of sand and gravel outside the WSA. There is no potential for oil and gas. No known unpatented mining claims exist.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation abound within the WSA. Area visitors can participate in backpacking, camping, nature appreciation, historical sightseeing, scenic photography, hunting, horseback riding, and other activities. The relatively unintruded nature of the WSA and its setting, which includes the vertical backdrop of the Sierra Nevada and the White Mountains, is excellent for most primitive recreation activities.

Special Features

The WSA contains numerous features of significance. The area contains geological curiosities including rhyolitic columns in Chidago Canyon and en echelon fault scarps. Wildlife values of the WSA include crucial winter habitat for mule deer and nesting habitat for raptors in the Red Rock and Chidago Canyons. Portions of the WSA are rich in cultural values including petroglyphs. The area is used for archaeological research and observation by the public and scientific community.

VEGETATION

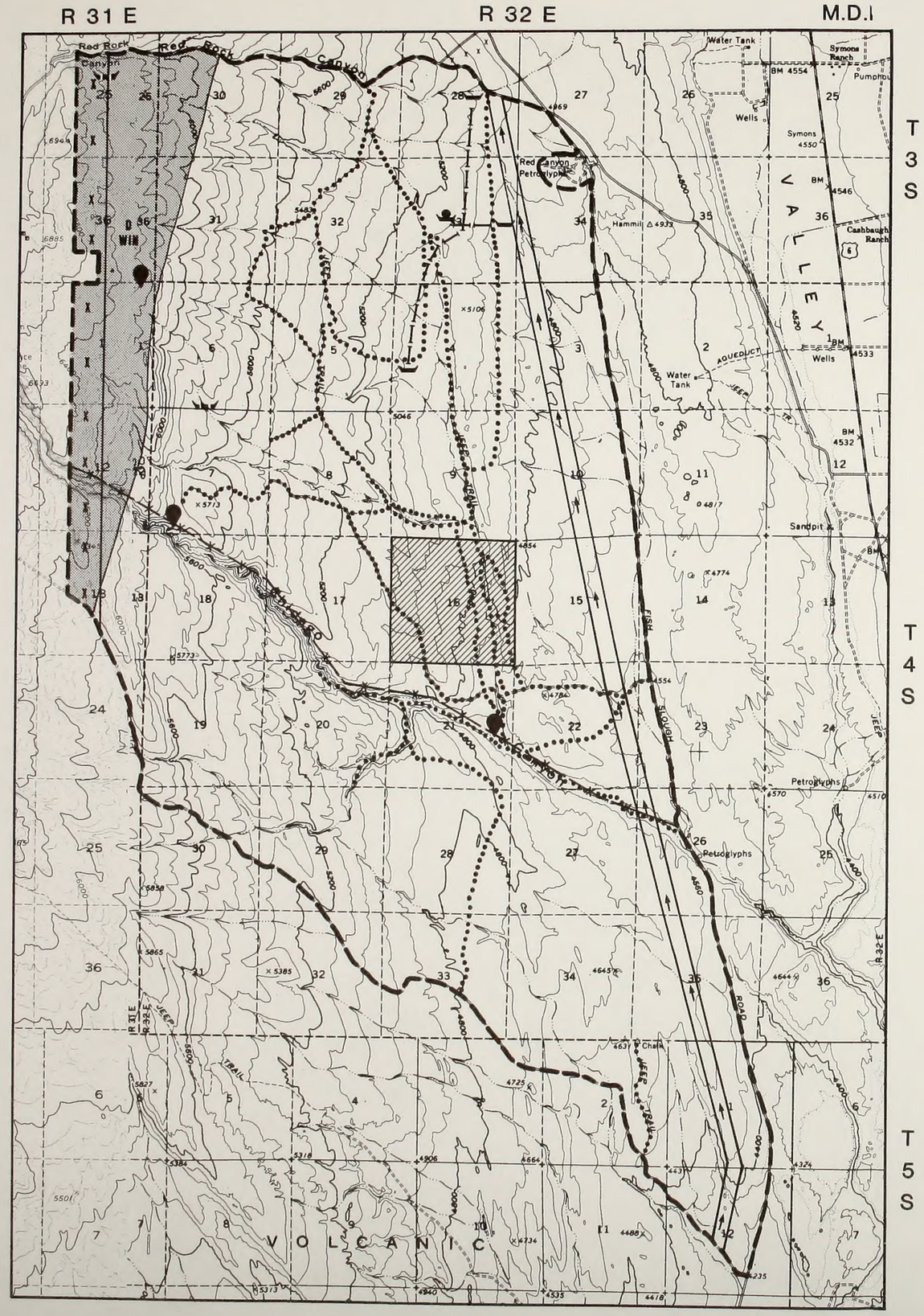
The WSA supports a uniform composition of shadscale scrub such as spiny hopsage, shadscale, ephedra, and dalea. During certain years, wildflowers are prevalent.

GRAZING

The WSA lies mainly within the Hammil Valley Allotment. Cattle graze from October 15 to June 15. Livestock use is confined to the northern portion of the WSA. The livestock grazing system is season long. A 9-mile-long livestock driveway runs along the eastern edge of the WSA and is used mostly by sheep during June. The year-to-year use of the livestock driveway is intermittent depending on seasonal forage availability. A total of 908 AUMs is available in the WSA. The WSA contains a 2-mile pipeline and four associated troughs. Two additional water developments are proposed. A 5-mile allotment boundary fence is proposed for construction. The fence would bisect the unit, and is needed to reduce and control livestock from utilizing scenic Chidago Canyon as well as to prevent cattle drift into the adjoining Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The WSA is also within the Volcanic Tableland Allotment. Sheep graze the allotment from May 1 to June 15. Livestock operators use trailers, trucks, and water trucks to support livestock operations.

WILDLIFE

The WSA provides habitat for chukar. A few reintroduced pronghorn antelope use the area intermittently. The area is part of crucial winter habitat for Casa Diablo mule deer herd. A cooperative habitat management plan for mule deer is prescribed to be developed between the Inyo National Forest



N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Transmission Line Corridor
- Deer Wintering Habitat
- Existing Bird Guzzler
- Proposed Fenceline
- Proposed Water Development
- Existing Pipeline and Trough
- Existing Storage Tank and Trough
- Livestock Driveway

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA

CA-010-079

Existing Resources

MAP 36

and the BLM. Chidago Canyon provides nesting habitat for golden eagles and other raptors, and Red Rock Canyon provides nesting habitat for golden eagles. Three bird and small mammal guzzler facilities are in the center of the WSA. Motorized access for maintenance is needed periodically. The unit is very dry during the summer.

The eastern portion of the WSA is part of the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Area of Critical Environmental Concern management plan prescribes protection of the aquifer recharge source within the WSA in order to maintain the wetland habitat, which lies outside, but adjacent to the WSA.

RECREATION

Some hunting and off-road vehicle use is occurring throughout the WSA. Approximately 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes, consisting of two track ways and four-wheel drive routes, are located in the WSA. Most of these routes are located north of Chidago Canyon. In addition, there are approximately 11 miles of trail systems in the WSA used primarily by motorcyclists (light to moderate use) and horseback riders. Trail proliferation has increased in past years. There are approximately 700 visitor days per year of recreation use in the WSA. Approximately 500 of these visitor days are related to motorized recreational access. Most use is by local residents. Use is dispersed, considered to be moderate, and heaviest during the cool winter and spring months. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. Motor vehicle use in this area was designated in 1983 as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. The routes and trails north of Chidago Canyon are used for livestock grazing related activities, maintenance of wildlife guzzlers, and various recreation uses. Visual resources of the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class IV in the south-central portion of the WSA and Visual Resource Management Class III in the remainder of the unit.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This unit lies within the ethnographic territory of the Bishop Paiute Indian Tribe. The Bishop Paiute as well as several other Indian groups have identified site types lying within this WSA as having religious significance.

Less than 1% of this unit has been inventoried for cultural value. It is predicted that the prehistoric cultural sensitivity ranges from low to high. The open upland areas which characterize the majority of the WSA are considered to have a low sensitivity. The primary economic focus of the area appears to have been seed collecting and processing, although hunting camps are also present. Petroglyph sites are known to occur sporadically throughout the unit. Currently there are plans to excavate two sites lying within the WSA. In addition, the 1984 Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Volcanic Tablelands prescribes a Class III survey to locate and record the WSA's cultural resources and sites.

The area is used for archaeological research and observation by the public and scientific community. Some unauthorized collection of artifacts is occurring.

LANDS

All public land in the WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931, and E.O. 5843. Both withdrawals restrict disposal of these public lands. In addition, locatable nonmetalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 5843. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. Two nonpublic inholdings (680 acres) exist in the unit. A primitive vehicle route provides access to the 640-acre parcel.

The Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan prescribes a half-mile-wide utility line corridor along 4¼ miles of the west boundary. This corridor lies in the WSA one-quarter mile east of the present transmission line boundary. There is a high current demand to use this corridor. There is some opportunity west of the existing transmission line boundary to accommodate the prescribed corridor and construction of new powerline facilities.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The area has a moderate potential for metallic minerals in the western quarter; the remainder has low potential. Mineral development potential in the west quarter is moderate for metallic minerals (gold, silver, tungsten) due to favorable rock types underlying this area at a shallow depth. Metallic mineral development potential in the remainder of the WSA is low. There is very low potential for uranium and thorium, no potential for oil and gas, and moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals. Mineral development potential for nonmetallic minerals, uranium, and thorium is low. There is moderate potential for geothermal. There is current interest in the area to quarry decorative building stone known as Bishop tuff. Geothermal development potential is low due to lack of interest by related industry. One mining claim is located on the western edge of the WSA and appears to be related to metallic minerals.

Photo 9 - Chidago Canyon WSA

FISH SLOUGH WSA
(CA-010-080)

The Fish Slough WSA contains 14,450 acres of Bureau land. Nonpublic land is located within a portion of the unit. The majority of the WSA is surrounded by Bureau land. The east boundary lies adjacent to nonpublic land; a small portion of the WSA's northwest corner also abuts private land. The unit is located along the west edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province.

The unit lies in the southern portion of the Volcanic Tablelands, a geological result of cinder and hot gas eruptions from vents in Long Valley which occurred 700,000 years ago. This unique landscape is characterized by a series of successive rhyolitic ash deposits which culminated in a broad tableland terrain feature. Topography is mostly gentle and rolling. Volcanic terraces and abrupt cliffs resulting from en echelon fault scarps are evident in this WSA. Numerous canyons and drainages dissect the eastern portion of the unit. Fumarolic mounds and ridges dot the landscape adding scenic variety. The pastel volcanic color tones provide striking visual effects by the sun's low angle during morning and evening hours.

Vegetation in the WSA consists of a uniform composition of Great Basin shrubs. No permanent water source exists in the WSA.

(See Map 37, p. 3-49.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The Fish Slough WSA has retained its overall naturalness. There are very few human influences in the WSA. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes are in the WSA. These vehicle routes are substantially unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole.

The gentle nature of the rolling landscape and its sparse, low-lying vegetation renders the WSA vulnerable to physical encroachment from activities such as indiscriminate ORV use.

The western boundary is formed by a high voltage transmission line within a utility corridor planned for multiple transmission lines in the future.

Solitude

The unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The unit's large size, relative lack of man-made features, and terrain variety provide intimate, enclosed areas as well as the opportunity to experience spaciousness on the broad, expansive terraces.

R 31 E R 32 E M.D.M.

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T 5 S

T 6 S

WSA CA-010-082

WSA CA-010-081

V O L C A N I C T A B L E L A N D

A N D

MONO CO
INYO CO

Petroglyphs

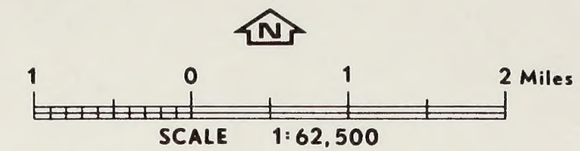
Spring

Slough

JEEP TRAIL

ROAD

Fish



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Transmission Line Corridor
- Proposed Fenceline
- Livestock Driveway

FISH SLOUGH WSA

CA-010-080

Existing Resources

MAP 37

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

There are ample opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the WSA. Some opportunities that are readily available for area visitors include backpacking, camping, nature appreciation, historical sightseeing, scenic photography, hunting, horseback riding, etc. Views of the White Mountains and the Eastern Sierra enhance these primitive recreation experiences.

Special Features

Several features of noteworthy significance are located in the WSA. The area provides habitat for pronghorn antelope. The area contains cultural values and is used by the public and scientific community for archaeological research and observation. The geological features of this WSA provide an excellent opportunity for scientific field study.

VEGETATION

The WSA supports a uniform composition of shadscale scrub such as spiny hopsage, shadscale, ephedra, dalea, and cholla. During certain years, wildflowers are prevalent.

GRAZING

The unit contains the Volcanic Tableland Allotment. Sheep graze this area from May 1 to June 15. The livestock grazing system is season long. A 5-mile-long livestock driveway runs along the eastern edge of the WSA and is used mostly by sheep during June. The year-to-year sheep use of the WSA and livestock driveway is intermittent dependent upon seasonal forage availability. Herders use trucks, trailers, and water trucks for their livestock operation. A total of 377 AUMs is available in the WSA. There are no existing range improvements. A one-mile fenceline is proposed for construction across the southern tip of the unit to control livestock from utilizing the northern portion of the unit and to prevent livestock from drifting into the adjoining Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) wetland habitat.

WILDLIFE

A few reintroduced pronghorn antelope use the area. A habitat management plan for mule deer is prescribed between the Inyo National Forest and the Bureau. The area is extremely dry during summers. The eastern portion of the WSA is part of the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC management plan prescribes protection of the aquifer recharge source within the WSA in order to maintain the wetland habitat, which lies outside but adjacent to the WSA.

RECREATION

Some motorized recreation activities are occurring, mostly related to hunting, motorcycling, etc. Motor vehicle use in this area was designated in 1983 as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. A few primitive vehicle routes exist in the WSA totaling approximately 8 miles. It is estimated that 500 visitor days per year occur in the WSA. Approximately 350 of these visitor days are attributed to motorized recreational access. Recreation activity in the WSA includes motorcycle touring, mountain biking, horseback riding, off-road vehicle use, cultural sightseeing, etc. Most use occurs during the cooler spring and winter months. Most users are from the Bishop, Chalfant, and Hammil Valley areas. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA.

Visual resources of the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class IV in the north half of the WSA, while the remainder is prescribed as Class III. Solitude along the west side of the WSA is impaired by the boundary transmission line.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This unit lies within the ethnographic territory of the Bishop Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known.

Less than 1% of the area has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. The predicted cultural sensitivity for the unit is low-to-high. The open upland areas which characterize the majority of the WSA are considered to have a low sensitivity. Ethnographer Julian Steward identified a portion of the east side of this WSA as a prehistoric indian ricegrass collecting area. Sites lying throughout the WSA primarily represent seed collecting sites, although some hunting camps and petroglyph sites are present.

The area is used for archeological research and observation by the public and scientific community. The Bishop Paiute Elders group has expressed interest in the area's cultural management. A 1984 Cultural Resource Management Plan prescribes a Class III survey to locate and record cultural resources and sites in 20% of the WSA.

LANDS

All public land in the WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931, and E.O. 5843. Both withdrawals restrict disposal of these public lands. In addition, locatable nonmetalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 5843. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. A corner of a power site reserve (30 acres) extends into the western edge of WSA. The reserve is inactive and due to a lack of interest, it has been recommended for revocation. One parcel of nonpublic land (640 acres) exists in the WSA. There is currently no access to or use being made of this inholding. The Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan prescribes a half-mile-wide utility line corridor along the west boundary where a

transmission line currently exists. This corridor lies in the WSA one-quarter mile east of the present transmission line corridor along the 2½-mile west boundary. There is a high current demand to use this corridor. The adjoining Casa Diablo WSA shares this common powerline boundary feature with the WSA. If Fish Slough WSA and Casa Diablo WSA are designated wilderness in their entirety, utilization of this corridor would be precluded except within the existing right-of-way that separates these two WSAs.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The area has low potential for metallic minerals, no potential for oil and gas, moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals, and very low potential for uranium and thorium. Mineral development potential is low for uranium, thorium, and metallic minerals. There is moderate potential for geothermal. Geothermal development potential is low due to lack of interest by related industry. There are no known mining claims. Development potential of nonmetallic minerals is moderate due to current demand and mining of Bishop Tuff on adjacent Bureau lands.

Photo 10 - Fish Slough WSA

VOLCANIC TABLELAND
(CA-010-081)

The Volcanic Tableland WSA contains 11,840 acres of Bureau land. Bureau land surrounds a majority of the WSA. Portions of nonpublic land adjoin the southern and western boundaries. The unit is located along the west edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province.

The unit occupies the southern portion of the Volcanic Tablelands, a geological result of cinder and hot gas eruptions from vents in Long Valley which occurred 700,000 years ago. This unique and vast landscape comprises a series of successive layers of rhyolitic ash deposits which formed a broad tableland expanse gently sloping from northwest to southeast. Generally unaffected by erosion, the unit contains a few low rolling hills, and numerous uplifted volcanic terraces and ridges in the south half of the WSA. Several small bouldery canyons are located along the WSA's southern boundary. The pinkish and reddish volcanic landscape colors provide striking visual hues during the morning and evening hours.

Vegetation in the unit consists of Great Basin shrubs. No permanent water source exists in the WSA.

(See Map 38, p. 3-57.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The Volcanic Tableland WSA has retained its natural character. The unit is one of subdued relief; its expansive nature can readily reveal unnatural features of significant size. Only a few very minor influences are within the unit. This includes a reservoir and approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The low magnitude of these influences makes them substantially unnoticeable in the broad spaciousness of the WSA.

The nature of the landscape makes the WSA vulnerable to physical impacts from activities such as indiscriminate ORV use.

Solitude

The unit's broad uncluttered expanse is the major feature that contributes to the outstanding opportunities for solitude that exist in the WSA. The small canyons and volcanic bluffs enhance these opportunities. Outside influences consisting of the west boundary transmission line and the Bishop community degrade opportunities for solitude in localized portions of the WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Primitive and unconfined opportunities for recreation experiences are readily available throughout the WSA. These include activities such as

hunting, hiking, nature appreciation, scenic photography, camping, etc. Scenic views of the Eastern Sierra and the White Mountains can be seen from the WSA.

Special Features

Special features in the WSA include habitat for pronghorn antelope.

VEGETATION

The unit consists mostly of low shrubs such as spiny hopsage, shadscale, ephedra, dalea, as well as intermixed annual plants.

GRAZING

The unit contains the Volcanic Tableland and Chalk Bluff Allotments. Cattle graze from October 1 to May 15. Sheep graze from May 1 to June 15. Livestock use by both cattle and sheep is low. The livestock grazing system is season long. A livestock driveway runs along the east side of the WSA and is used mostly by sheep during June. The 5½-mile-long livestock driveway is located south of the Casa Diablo Road. The year-to-year use of the livestock driveway is intermittent. Herders use trucks, trailers, and water trucks for their livestock operations. The WSA contains a total of 741 AUMs. One large reservoir exists in the WSA. Proposed developments include three water facilities. These projects would improve livestock distribution and reduce localized overutilization.

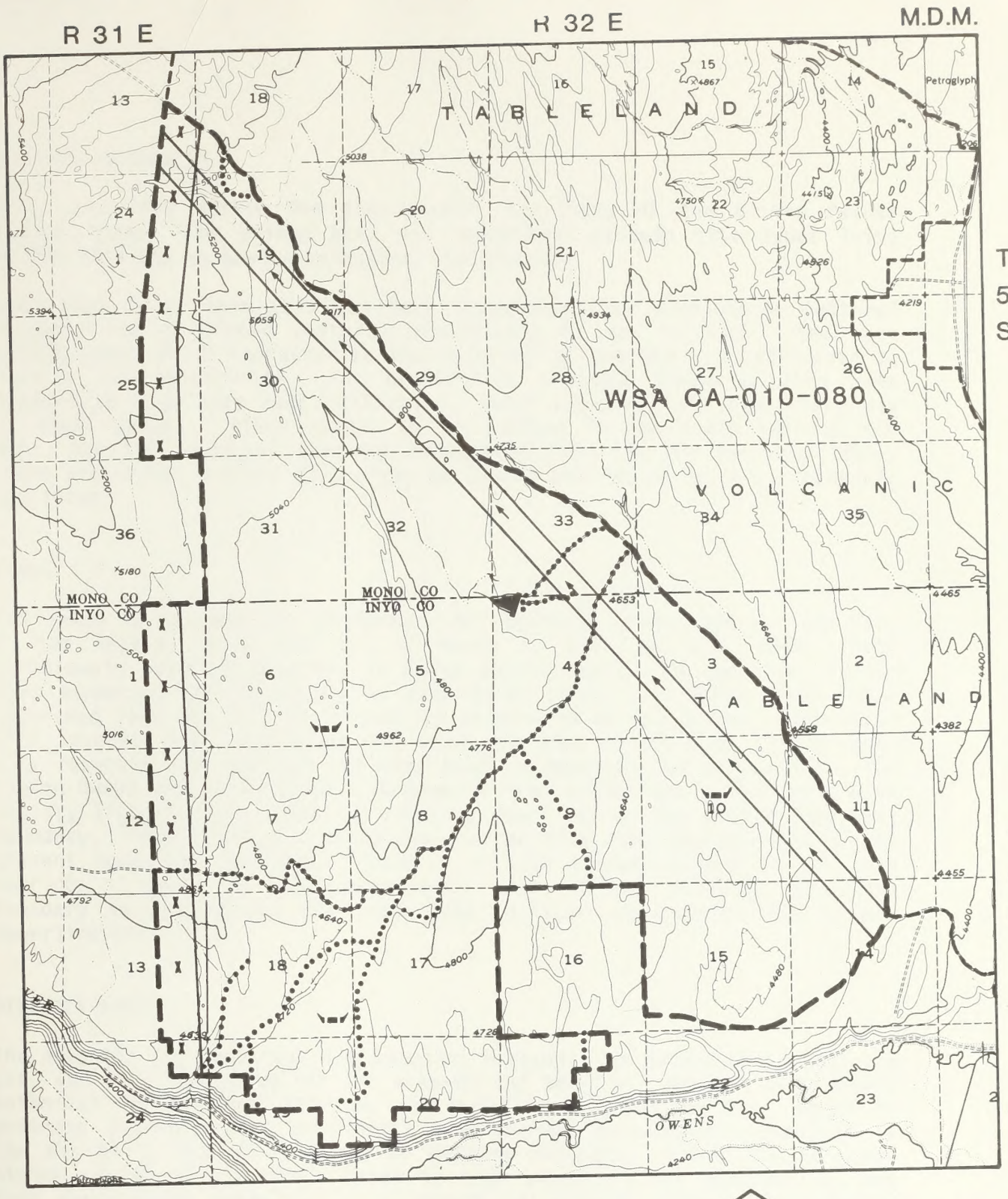
WILDLIFE

The WSA provides limited habitat due to sparse vegetation and the lack of water sources for wildlife other than small mammals, birds and reptiles such as lizards and snakes. A few reintroduced pronghorn antelope utilize the northern tip of the WSA. Also, mule deer occasionally drift into the northern portion of the WSA from the nearby Casa Diablo Mountain area to the northwest.

RECREATION

Light motorized access related to sightseeing is occurring. Motor vehicle use was designated in this area in 1983 as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. A few primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 15 miles exist in the WSA. These routes are used mostly by mountain bicyclists, motorcyclists, horseback riders, off-road vehicles, general sightseers, etc. Approximately 400 visitor days per year are attributed to various recreation uses. Approximately 300 of these visitor days are related to motorized recreational access. Use is heaviest during the cooler winter and spring months. Most users are from the Bishop, Chalfant and Hammil Valley areas. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. Visual resources of the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class III.

Environment



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Transmission Line Corridor
- Proposed Water Development
- Existing Reservoir
- Livestock Driveway

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA

CA-010-081

Existing Resources

MAP 38

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This unit lies within the ethnographic territory of the Bishop Paiute Indian Tribe. The Bishop band has identified certain site types lying within this WSA as having religious significance.

Less than 1% of this unit has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. The predicted cultural sensitivity is low to high. The open upland areas which characterize the majority of the WSA are considered to have a low sensitivity. The prehistoric economic focus of this area appears to have been seed collection. Most sites reflect short-term use by small groups. Sites appear to be located in the south half of the WSA. The 1984 Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Volcanic Tablelands prescribes a Class III survey to locate and record cultural resources and sites.

LANDS

All lands in the WSA are withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931 and E.O. 5843. Both withdrawals restrict disposal of these public lands. In addition, locatable nonmetalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 5843. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. Two power site reserves are located on the southwest edge of the WSA. These power site reserves are inactive and have been recommended for revocation. The Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan prescribes a half-mile-wide utility line corridor along an existing powerline on the 6-mile-long west boundary. This corridor extends one-quarter mile into the WSA east of the present powerline boundary. There is a high current demand to use this corridor. There is some opportunity west of the existing powerline boundary to accommodate the prescribed corridor and construction of new powerline facilities.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The area has low potential for metallic minerals, no potential for oil and gas, and very low potential for uranium and thorium. Mineral development potential for uranium, thorium, and metallic minerals is low. There is moderate potential for geothermal. Geothermal development potential is low due to a lack of interest by related industry. There are no known mining claims in the WSA. There is high potential for nonmetallics and high development potential as a result of current demand and existing mining activity for Bishop tuff immediately south of the WSA.

Photo 11 - Volcanic Tableland WSA

CASA DIABLO
(CA-010-082)

The Casa Diablo WSA contains 5,547 acres of BLM land and 3,620 acres of adjacent Inyo National Forest land. BLM land adjoins the north, south and east boundaries of the WSA, although a small portion of the WSA abuts nonpublic land to the east. Inyo National Forest is contiguous to the west. The unit is located along the west edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province.

The landscape is dominated by Casa Diablo Mountain (7,912 feet). Casa Diablo (Spanish for "House of the Devil") is an island of older granite rock rising through lithified volcanic ash. The mountain lies in the western portion of the WSA while the remainder of the unit is typified by volcanic terraces in the south, and rocky and rugged hills in the north-central section. Numerous canyons and sandy washes are located in the unit.

The vegetation of the WSA includes mixed desert shrubs at lower elevations; the higher elevations support pinyon pine.

(See Map 39, p. 3-63.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The east half of the WSA has generally retained its natural character. Approximately 3 miles of primitive vehicle routes, in this portion of the WSA, are considered substantially unnoticeable. The remaining west half of the WSA contains surface disturbances associated with the Casa Diablo Mine and others that are located nearby. Additionally, there are 5 miles of primitive vehicle routes associated with the mining in this portion of the WSA.

An electric transmission line parallels the east boundary outside the WSA. An additional transmission line is also planned for construction within the existing right-of-way.

Solitude

The unit's highly variable topography, vegetation and size combine together to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The unit's physical character and spaciousness impart a sense of isolation and unconfined freedom of movement to area visitors.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the WSA include hunting, hiking, camping, horseback riding, etc. The precipitous terrain provides primitive challenges to area visitors.

Special Features

Special features found in the WSA include crucial winter habitat for mule deer.

VEGETATION

This is a vegetation transition area. On the WSA's east side, there is a shadscale scrub type dominated by shadscale and dalea. Moving west, the vegetation quickly changes to a big sagebrush-bitterbrush type with pinyon trees on upland slopes.

GRAZING

The unit contains the Volcanic Tableland Allotment; sheep graze from May 1 to June 15. Yearly sheep use is considered low. The livestock grazing system is season long. A total of 144 AUMs is available in the WSA. Herders use trucks, trailers, and water trucks for their livestock operations. There are no existing livestock improvements and none proposed.

WILDLIFE

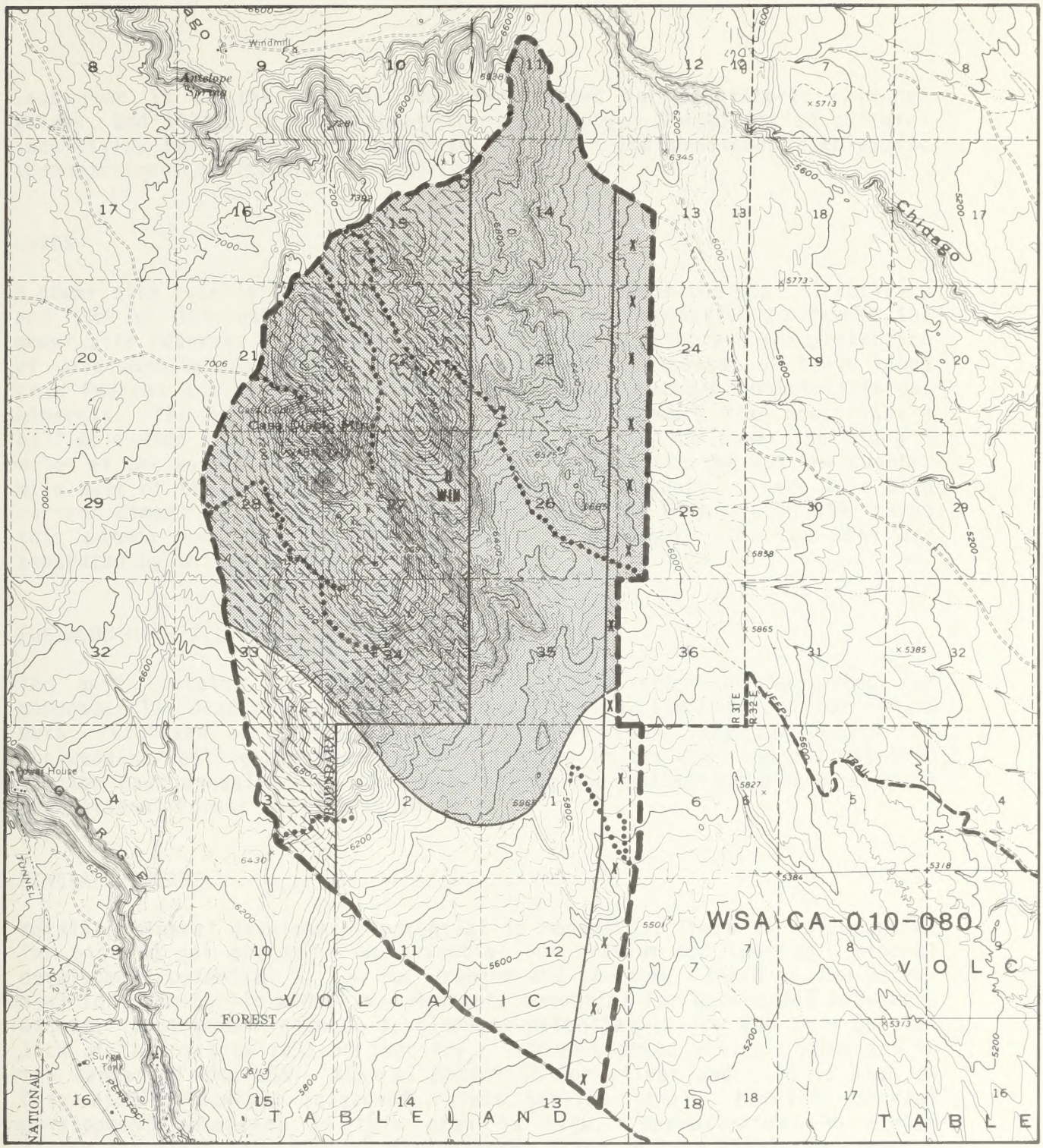
The area provides a portion of crucial winter habitat for the Casa Diablo mule deer herd. Large numbers (200-500) of mule deer utilize the WSA during especially severe winters. A few reintroduced antelope also use the area. A cooperative habitat management plan is prescribed for mule deer between the Inyo National Forest and the BLM.

RECREATION

Deer hunting and motorized access related to sightseeing are the primary recreational activities. An estimated 350 visitor days per year occur in the WSA. Of these visitor days 300 are related to motorized recreational access. Motor vehicle use was designated for this area in 1983 as limited to existing routes and trails. There are a few primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 8 miles. Most use is by local residents. No recreation facilities exist in this WSA. Visual resources of the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class III along the west portion of the WSA and Visual Resource Management Class IV along the east boundary.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This unit lies within the ethnographic territory of the Bishop Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known.



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Uninventoried National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Transmission Line Corridor
- D WIN — Deer Wintering Habitat

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

CASA DIABLO WSA

CA-010-082

Existing Resources

MAP 39

Less than 1% of the WSA has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values, and little is known about its prehistory. The predicted cultural sensitivity for the area is moderate to high. The predicted prehistoric economic focus of the area is seed collection.

LANDS

A power site reserve exists in the southern portion of the WSA. Inactivity and lack of interest have contributed to a recommendation to revoke the power site reserve. All public land in the WSA is withdrawn for protection of watershed values by E.O. 5843 which prohibits disposal of these lands from Federal administration and the mining of locatable nonmetalliferous minerals. The Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan prescribes a half-mile-wide utility line corridor along an existing powerline along 5 miles of the east boundary. This corridor extends into the WSA one-quarter mile west of the present transmission powerline boundary. There is a high current demand to use this corridor. The adjoining Fish Slough WSA shares this common powerline boundary feature with the WSA. The two WSAs are separated by this existing right-of-way.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The unit contains 700 acres of pinyon, which could be harvested for noncommercial dead and down, or dead and standing, fuelwood and for pinyon nuts. Eighteen acres are accessible. There is a very low demand for fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting in the WSA. An estimated 10 visitor days annually are spent woodcutting and collecting pinyon nuts on the National Forest portion of the unit.

MINERALS/ENERGY

Metallic mineral development potential is moderate. There is no potential for oil and gas and very low potential for uranium and thorium. Mineral development potential is low for uranium and thorium. There is low potential for nonmetallic minerals. Moderate potential for geothermal resources exists. Geothermal resource development potential is low due to a general lack of interest by related industry. Two unpatented mining claims are in the center of the WSA. Mineral potential for silver and gold is high on Casa Diablo Mountain (adjacent Forest Service land). Metallic mineral development potential in this area is high. Approximately 30 mining claims and associated surface disturbances exist on Casa Diablo Mountain.

Photo 12 - Casa Diablo WSA

EXCELSIOR
(CA-010-088)

The Excelsior WSA contains 9,100 acres of BLM land. The majority of the WSA is surrounded by BLM lands. The Inyo and Toiyabe National Forests are contiguous to the east. The unit is located along the west edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province.

The WSA occupies the northeast corner of Mono Basin. It consists of very gently southwest-sloping valley fill deposits of ancient Lake Russell. The terrain is uniform in character except for some small volcanic bluffs in the southeast corner of the WSA. As a result, the WSA landscape features are subdued and visually monotonous.

The area vegetation consists of Great Basin shrubs with some stands of pinyon pine and Utah juniper. No permanent water source exists in the WSA.

(See Map 40, p. 3-69.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The natural character of the WSA has been relatively untouched by man. A few primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 3-4 miles exist in the unit. These routes are unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole.

Solitude

The spaciousness and vegetative screening of the WSA combine together to provide area visitors with outstanding opportunities for solitude. State Highway 167 degrades these opportunities along the boundaries.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation include activities such as camping, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, etc. Scenic views of the Eastern Sierra, Mono Lake, and the Bodie Hills are available from within the unit.

Special Features

The major special feature this WSA contains is spring, summer, and fall habitat for pronghorn antelope.

VEGETATION

Half of the WSA is a big sagebrush-indian ricegrass vegetation type. In the northeast corner is a large juniper stand with a sagebrush understory. In the southeast corner, two hills support stands of pinyon-juniper with understories of big sagebrush and bitterbrush.

GRAZING

The unit contains the Mono Sand Flat Allotment. The season of use runs from December 1 to May 31, all cattle use. Cattle use is very low. An allotment management plan prescribes livestock grazing under a rest rotation system. A total of 408 AUMs is available in the WSA. Mineral block placement for cattle is required. A windmill development is proposed to provide water for cattle and improve their distribution. No other improvements exist within the WSA.

WILDLIFE

The area is spring, summer, and fall habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope. The area is winter habitat for wild horses. A rain collection basin for pronghorn and other wildlife species is proposed.

RECREATION

A few primitive vehicle routes (approximately 4 miles) occur in the unit. It is estimated that 100 visitor days per year occur in the WSA, all related to motorized vehicle access. Rabbit hunting is a common activity in the unit. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposes motor vehicle use in this area be limited to existing routes and trails. Visual resources in the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II. Solitude is impaired by State Highway 167 and the eastern transmission line boundary.

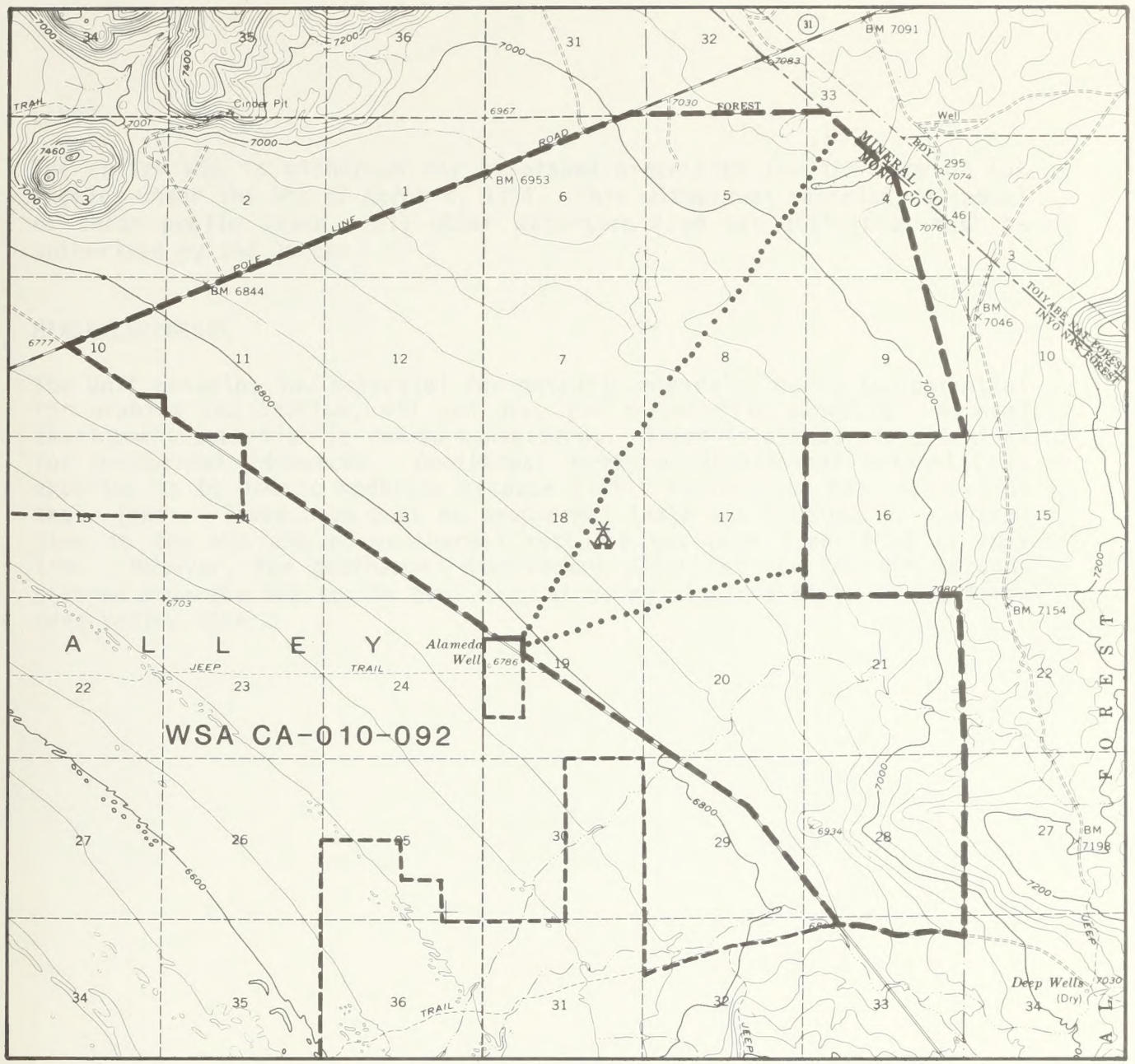
CULTURAL

This area lies in the ethnographic territory of the Mono Lake Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known.

Less than 1% of the area has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values, and little is known about prehistoric use in this unit. The predicted cultural sensitivity for this area is moderate to high particularly in the uplands and the northern portion of the WSA based on regional use and settlement patterns. Seed collection appears to have been the primary focus of the prehistoric inhabitants.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING

Contains 4,300 acres of juniper which could be harvested for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood; 880 acres are accessible. Demand is low. It is estimated that less than 40 cords of fuelwood could be harvested annually.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Primitive Vehicle Route

Proposed Windmill, Storage Tank, and Trough

EXCELSIOR WSA

CA-010-088

Existing Resources

MAP 40

LANDS

The entire WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931. This withdrawal restricts disposal of these public lands. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The unit contains low potential for metallic minerals; no to low potential for uranium and thorium, oil and gas, and nonmetallic minerals. Mineral development potential is low to nonexistent. There is a moderate potential for geothermal resources. Geothermal resource development potential is expected to be low to moderate because little exploration has occurred on these lands. There have been no geothermal lease applications or exploration in the WSA and no geothermal resource has been identified at this time. However, the geothermal development potential for the WSA is considered moderate due to its proximity of being within 3 miles of the Mono-Long Valley KGRA.

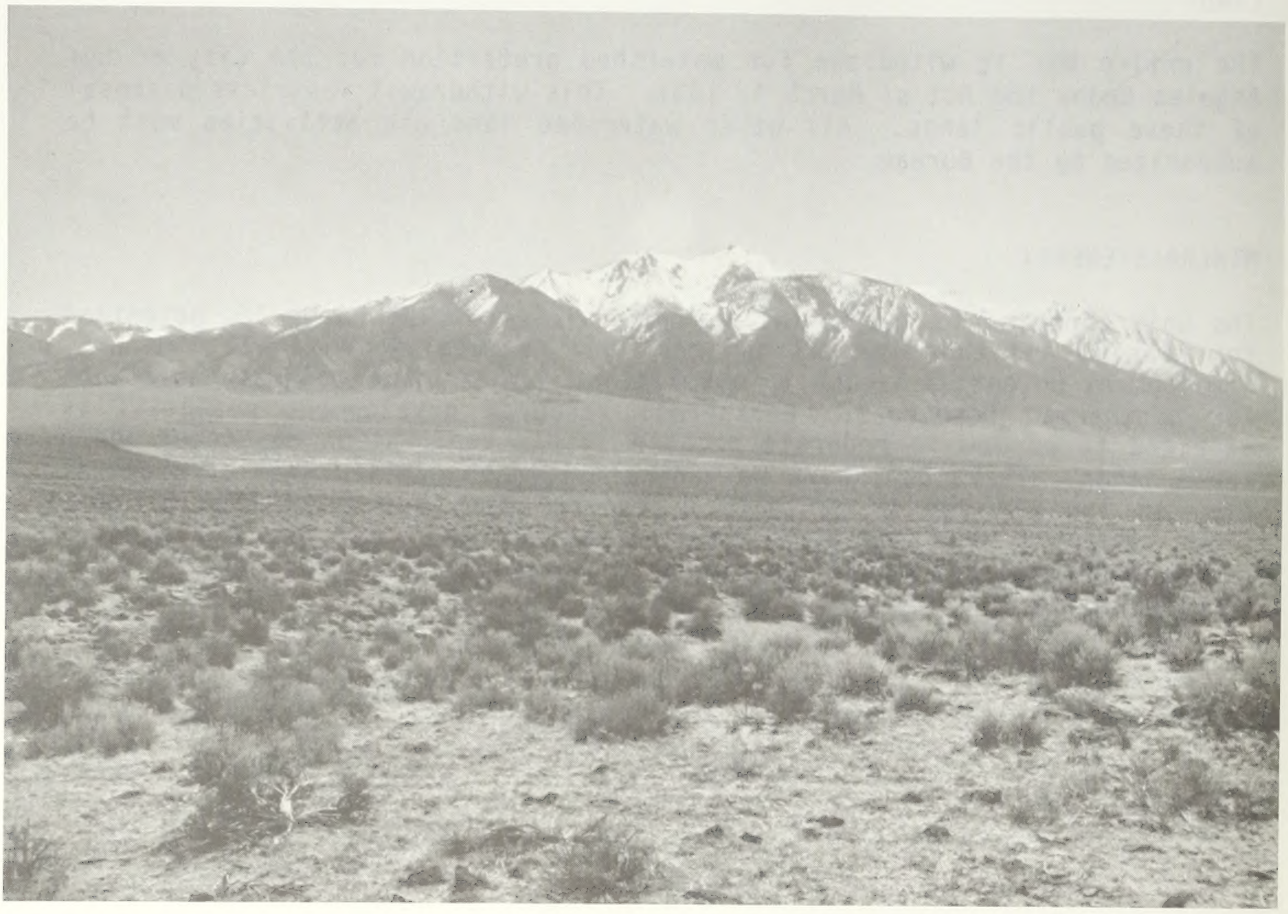


Photo 13 - Excelsior WSA

GRANITE MOUNTAINS
(CA-010-090)

The WSA contains 54,941 acres of BLM land and 3,960 acres of contiguous Inyo National Forest land to the east. The unit is bounded by the Mono Lake Scenic Area (managed by Inyo National Forest) to the west, by Inyo National Forest and BLM land to the east and south, and by BLM and nonpublic land to the north.

The WSA comprises a broad landscape of various physical features. The west portion of the WSA lies several miles east and south of Mono Lake, at the southeast edge of Mono Basin. This portion of the WSA consists of westward-sloping fill deposits of ancient Lake Russell. The east portion of the WSA includes rugged granitic mountain complexes and rolling basalt hills with numerous closed basins. A small portion of Adobe Valley lies in the southeast corner of the WSA. The primary soil type of this WSA is sandy, pumiceous earth.

The unit provides a variety of visual amenities that are vividly striking during morning and evening hours. The Granite Mountain range, in the southern portion of the WSA, contains irregular granitic crags which are especially scenic and visually appealing. Cowtrack Mountain, in the center of the WSA, is composed of volcanic pumice which sharply contrasts with the nearby granitic rock formations. These physical values as well as scenic views outside the WSA (Mono Lake, Glass Mountain, etc.) provide a natural wilderness setting for area visitors to enjoy.

Vegetation in the WSA varies and includes varieties of mixed desert shrubs and stands of pinyon pine and Utah juniper. On September 29, 1984, lands surrounding Mono Lake were congressionally designated as a U.S. Forest Service Scenic Area under the California Wilderness Act of 1984. The WSA boundary was adjusted eastward and reduced by approximately 1,800 acres as a result of the land transfer to the Forest Service.

(See Map 41, p. 3-75.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The unit has maintained its overall natural character and primitive setting. Some man-made influences do exist in the WSA but are considered visually negligible due to the unit's large size and variable terrain. In addition, the magnitude of these influences is low. They include pipelines, livestock water troughs, fences, some mining prospects, and approximately 40 miles of primitive, sandy vehicle routes. Some routes are being reinvaded by nearby vegetation giving the routes a "two-track" appearance. Overall, these features have low, negligible effects on naturalness.

In 1984, a wildfire caused by area visitors burned most of the vegetation on 2,140 acres north of Cowtrack Spring. Several miles of catlines were constructed to prevent the fire from spreading. Although this is 4% of the WSA, the fire occurred in a basin area that is plainly and broadly visible from surrounding hillsides. The area appears as a barren and desolate landscape; windblown sand has masked much of the charred surface.

The catlines were closed to prevent vehicle access and the area was aerially reseeded in fall of 1985. Rehabilitation has been, to date, very successful with an initial establishment of grasses and forbs which currently blankets the area.

Solitude

The area provides abundant and varied opportunities for solitude. The WSA's size, diverse topographic features, and vegetative screening provide outstanding opportunities for seclusion. The burned area north of Cowtrack Spring imparts a feeling of desolation and barrenness throughout the internal basin, thus psychologically heightening one's isolation in the unit.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation experiences are abundant in the unit. These experiences include hunting, camping, backpacking, nature appreciation, scenic photography, hiking, rock climbing, etc. In addition, there are high scenic values within the WSA--Cowtrack Mountain and Granite Mountain--and outside the WSA--Mono Lake, the Eastern Sierra, Glass Mountain, and the White Mountains. This unique complex of diverse features provides extensive recreation opportunities for area visitors.

Special Features

The unit contains several special features of noteworthy interest. Wildlife values are high in the WSA. The WSA contains deer migration corridors and raptor nesting areas. A sensitive plant species, Eriogonum ampullaceum, occurs in the WSA. Remnants of historic Bodie-Mono Mills Railroad and prehistoric sites can also be found.

VEGETATION

The upper elevations in the north and east sides of the WSA are forested with pinyon and juniper. The lower hills and valleys are dominated by sagebrush and other mixed shrubs. The sagebrush type covers 65% of the WSA. In 1984, a wildfire destroyed most of the vegetation on 2,140 acres near Cowtrack Spring. This is 4% of the WSA.

The WSA contains a population of Eriogonum ampullaceum, a United States Fish and Wildlife Service candidate for the threatened and endangered species plant list. The population is located along Deep Wells Road at the extreme eastern edge of the unit. This annual plant is often found in areas having previous surface disturbances. Stability of the population is unknown.

Environment

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA
CA-010-090
Existing Resources
MAP 41

R 27 E

R 28 E

R 29 E

R 30 E

T 3 N

T 2 N

T 1 N

T 1 S

M.D.M.

MONO - WSA CA-010-092

BASIN NATIONAL FOREST SCENIC AREA

MONO BASIN NATIONAL FOREST SCENIC AREA

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

MONO BASIN NATIONAL FOREST

LONG VALLEY K.G.R.A.

MONO LAKE

MONO BASIN

LONG VALLEY

CONTRACT MOUNTAIN

GRANITE MOUNTAIN

GRANITE MTS.

INDEFINITE BOUNDARY

BODIE-MONO FALLS

MONO MILLS

BASE LINE

Deep Wells (Dry)

Warm Springs

Cowtrack Spring

Indian Spring

Gasgripe Spring

Adobe Ranch

Indian Meadows

North Canyon

Adobe Creek

Oak Creek

Granite Basin

Granite Mtn.

Granite Mt.

Dry Falls

Mono Mills (Site)

Simons Spring

Water Tank

Tunnel

Well

Spring

Springs

Pipeline

Fence

Jeep Trail

Trail

Old Railroad Grade

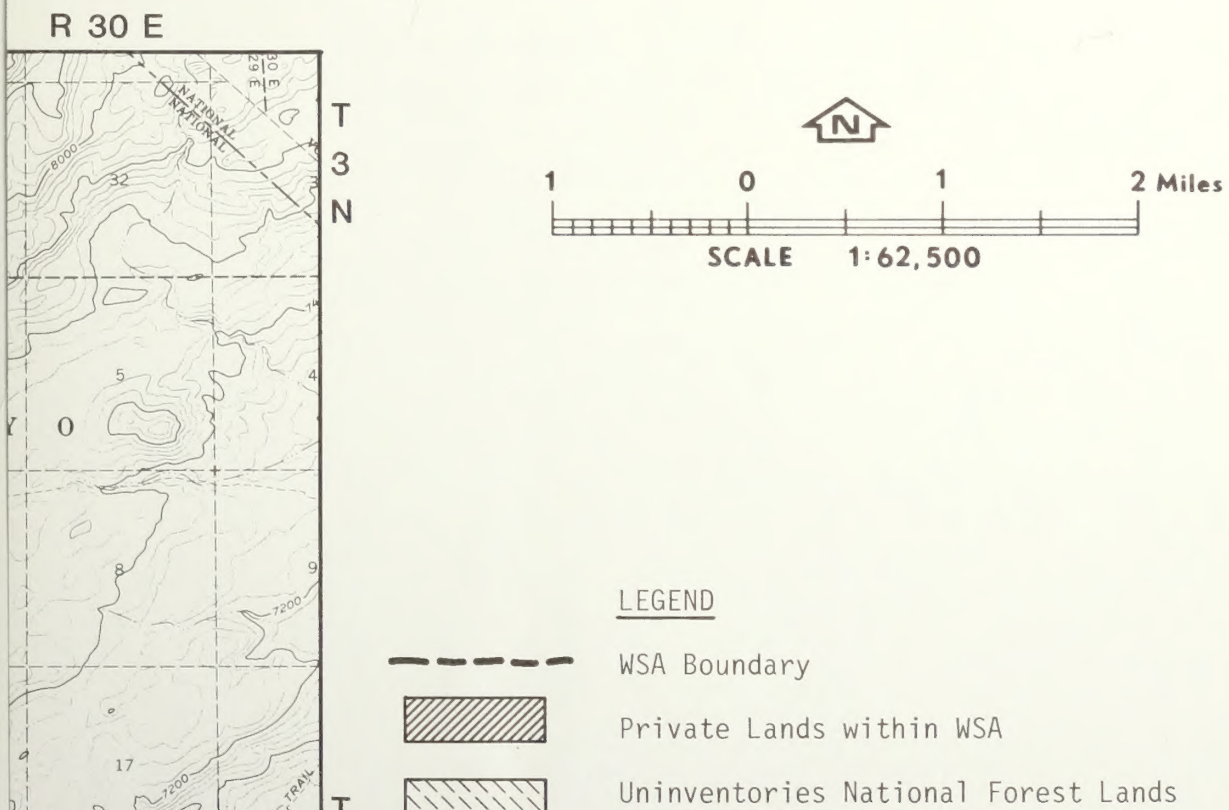
Railroad

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Uninventories National Forest Lands with BLM Wilderness Study Lead
- Former BLM Lands now in Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area
- Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Boundary
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Concentration of Mining Claims
- Materials Site Right-of-Way
- Mono-Long Valley K.G.R.A. Boundary
- ERIO AM — Eriogonum ampullaceum
- Existing Fenceline
- Existing Pipeline and Trough
- Proposed Pipeline and Trough
- Proposed Water Develoment
- Proposed Prescribed Burn Area
- Proposed Chemical Spray Area


R 30 E
T
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1
2 Miles
SCALE 1:62,500
LEGEND
WSA Boundary
Private Lands within WSA
Uninventories National Forest Lands

GRAZING

The WSA lies within four allotments. The majority of the WSA does not experience livestock use. Livestock use the southeast corner of the WSA and the west side of the WSA. The total WSA AUMs is 2,855. The Mono Sand Flat Allotment season of use runs from December 1 to May 31; 435 AUMs are allocated for cattle use. The allotment management plan prescribes a grazing system of rest rotation. The Mono Lake Allotment season of use runs from July 1 to October 15; 653 AUMs are allocated for sheep use. The grazing system in this and remaining allotments is season long. Livestock operators use trucks, trailers, and water trucks to support sheep herding operations. The Mono Mills-Dorn Allotment season of use runs from July 1 to October 15; 1,230 AUMs are allocated for sheep use. The Granite Mountain Allotment season of use runs from July 1 to October 15; 537 AUMs are allocated for cattle or sheep use. The WSA contains fences, and a pipeline (400 feet), and a spring exclosure. The unit contains 4 miles of fenceline and one-quarter mile of pipeline. Six water developments and two pipelines (one mile each) are proposed to improve sheep/cattle distribution. Two chemical sprays (2,500 acres) and five prescribed burns (5,500 acres) are proposed to increase forage production. This would result in a 569 AUM increase.

WILDLIFE

The southeast portion of the WSA comprises of two deer migration corridors for the Casa Diablo and Mono Lake mule deer herds, habitat for pronghorn antelope (managed under the Adobe Valley Pronghorn Antelope Habitat Management Plan - 1982). The Indian Spring area is part of yearlong chukar habitat and the Adobe Ranch area is part of a yearlong sage grouse habitat. The unit contains raptor nesting areas in Dry Creek and the Granite Mountain area. The southeast portion of the WSA provides winter habitat for the Pizona wild horse herd.

RECREATION

There is light to moderate motorized recreational activity occurring in the WSA. It is estimated that a total of 1,250 visitor days per year occur in the WSA with 1,000 of these visitor days related to motorized recreation use. A minimum of 400 of these visitor days are attributed to the Sierra Safari Motorcycle Poker Rally. This event occurs on sandy vehicle routes located in the WSA. In addition, general sightseeing, deer hunting, and rabbit hunting occur in the WSA. Numerous primitive vehicle routes are located in the area (approximately 40 miles). No recreation facilities exist in the WSA. Motor vehicle use is limited to existing routes and trails as designated in the Benton-Owens Valley and Bodie-Coleville MFPs. There is some visitation to remnants of the Bodie-Mono Mills Railroad. Motorized recreation use is anticipated to slowly increase by 100 visitor days to a total of 1,100 visitor days within 5 years. Visual resources are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II in the Mono Basin and Class III elsewhere.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Portions (approximately 3 miles) of the historic Bodie-Mono Mills Railroad can be found in the WSA. The railroad provided timber for housing and mines to Bodie during its gold boom years--1870 to 1900. In addition, there is a historic fuelwood cutting area in the WSA utilized by Chinese laborers to supply timber to Bodie. Interpretive facilities are recommended for this site. Unauthorized collection of artifacts is occurring.

This area lies within the ethnographic territory of the Mono Lake Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known.

Less than 1% of the unit has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. The predicted sensitivity for cultural sites is moderate to high. A protective research-oriented Cultural Resource Management Plan has been prepared for a site in the northern portion of the WSA within the Mono Basin. Pinyon nut collection, seed collection, and hunting appear to be the dominant prehistoric activities throughout this WSA.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The unit contains 12,000 acres of pinyon-juniper in the east half which could be harvested for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood and pinyon nuts; 1,100 acres are accessible. Some illegal cutting is occurring. Demand for fuelwood is low. It is estimated that less than 50 cords of fuelwood could be harvested annually.

Interest in pinyon nut collecting is high. Casual use is estimated at less than 50 visitor days per year with 20 vehicle trips associated with access to collecting areas.

LANDS

Portions of the WSA are withdrawn for watershed resource protection and for the municipal water supply for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931, E.O. 5843 and 5631. These withdrawals restrict disposal of affected public lands. In addition, nonmetalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 5843 and 5631. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. Two nonpublic parcels within the WSA total 200 acres. Access is not currently available. The WSA lies east and adjacent to the Inyo National Forest's Mono Lake Scenic Area which was congressionally designated under the California Wilderness Act of 1984 to preserve and protect the natural values of Mono Lake and its shoreline features.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The unit contains mostly low potential for metallic minerals with areas of moderate and no potential. Development potential for metallic minerals, such as molybdenum, is projected to be low due to lack of current and past activity; development potential for gold in the western portion of the WSA

is moderate. There is mostly low potential for uranium and thorium with moderate uranium potential in the southern portion and along the eastern edge. Uranium and thorium development potential is low due to the present depressed market conditions, the lack of a readily identifiable resource and known existing reserves outside the WSA. Approximately 60 mining claims are located in the WSA; the majority are located in the west half. There is moderate potential for sand and gravel in the closed basins with no potential in the majority of the WSA. Development potential for sand and gravel is low due to the unknown quality of the material and the lack of a nearby market. There is an abundance of this material outside the WSA. There is no potential for oil and gas. There is high potential for geothermal resources in the western third with moderate potential in the remainder of the WSA. There are pending geothermal lease applications. The WSA's western half is within the Mono-Long Valley Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA). Development potential for geothermal resources is moderate due to the presence of geothermal lease bids and applications in the KGRA. The limited amount of exploration activity in this area has not proved the presence or absence of a viable geothermal resource. The area outside the KGRA has low development potential for geothermal resources (moderate occurrence).

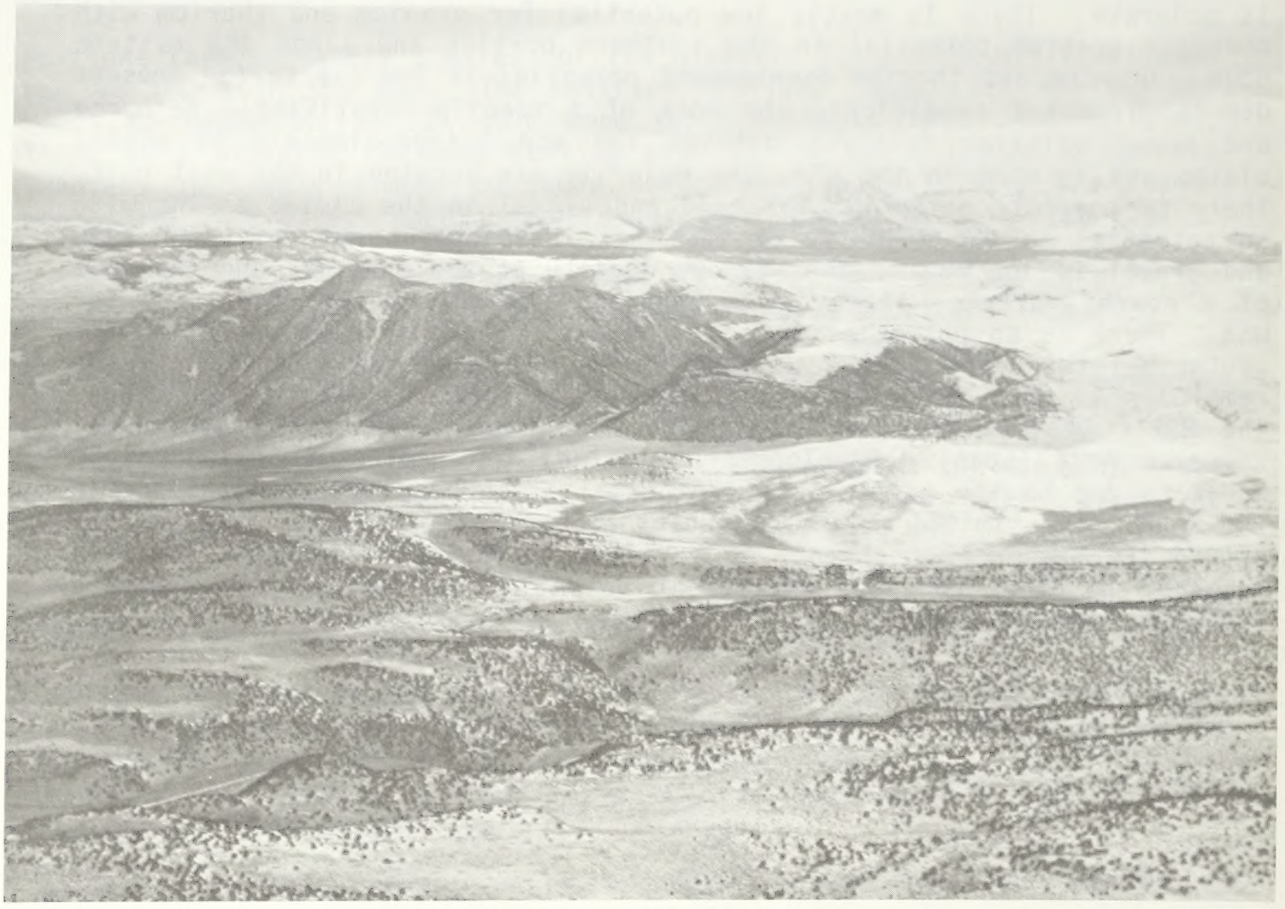


Photo 14 - Granite Mountains WSA

WALFORD SPRINGS
(CA-010-092)

Lying at the west edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province, the Walford Springs WSA contains 12,250 acres of public land. The WSA borders State Highway 167 and nonpublic land to the north, the Mono Lake Scenic Area which is managed by the Inyo National Forest to the west, and nonpublic and Bureau land to the south. A parcel of nonpublic land is located in the WSA.

The WSA is located a few miles east and north of Mono Lake. Occupying the northeast portion of Mono Basin, the unit consists of very gently southwest-sloping valley fill deposits, primarily lacustrine and sand dune deposition, of ancient Lake Russell. The terrain is rather uniform providing little scenic variety.

The vegetation of the WSA includes a uniform composition of low, very dense shrubs with some Juniper trees.

On September 29, 1984, lands surrounding Mono Lake were congressionally designated as a Scenic Area under the California Wilderness Act of 1984. As a result, the WSA boundary was adjusted eastward and reduced by approximately 950 acres.

(See Map 42, p. 3-83.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The area's natural character has been well preserved. A few man-made imprints, located in the unit, are generally unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole. The facilities include two fencelines and approximately 9 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The dense vegetation effectively screens the low visual impacts of the fence while the routes are being reinvaded by nearby shrubs giving the routes a "two-track" appearance. Overall, there is minimal visual impact.

Solitude

The broad expanse of the unit in association with the few man-made imprints throughout the area provides outside opportunities for solitude. The unit's dense vegetation enhances these opportunities. The outside influence of State Highway 167, the unit's northern boundary, slightly impairs solitude along the WSA's edge.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The area contains opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as camping, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, etc. Scenic views of the Eastern Sierra, the Bodie Hills, and Mono Lake are available from within the unit.

Special Features

The unit contains habitat for pronghorn antelope.

VEGETATION

The majority of vegetation grows on a low dune-type of soil formation. Predominant shrubs include big sagebrush, greasewood and cottonthorn. A juniper grove with a sagebrush understory occurs in the northwest corner of the unit.

GRAZING

The unit contains part of the Mono Sand Flat Allotment. The majority of the WSA is lightly used by cattle. The allotment management plan prescribes a rest-rotation grazing system. The season of use runs from December 1 to May 31; 516 AUMs are allocated for cattle use. A 3-mile and 4-mile fenceline are located in the unit. Mineral block placement required. A windmill development is proposed to provide water for cattle and to improve their distribution.

WILDLIFE

The unit is spring, summer, and fall habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope. The area is also winter habitat for wild horses. A rain collection basin for pronghorn and other wildlife species is proposed.

RECREATION

There is light use related to motorized recreational access in the WSA. It is estimated that a total of 600 visitor days per year occur in the WSA. Of this total use, 550 visitor days are attributed to motorized recreation use. Approximately 150 of these visitor days are related to general sightseeing and limited hunting. A few primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 9 miles are located in the WSA. Approximately 400 of the total visits are attributed to the Sierra Safari Motorcycle Poker Run. This event occurs on the existing sandy vehicle routes located in the WSA. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposes motor vehicle use to be designated in this area as limited to existing routes and trails. Nonmotorized recreation is estimated to be no more than 50 visitor days per year. There are no recreation facilities existing in the WSA. Visual resources are to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II. Solitude is impaired by northern boundary features of State Highway 167.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This area lies in the ethnographic territory of the Mono Lake Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known.

R 28 E R 29 E M.D.M.

WSA CA-010-088

WSA CA-010-090

MONO - LONG VALLEY K.G.R.A.

MONO VALLEY SCENIC AREA

MONO LAKE

T 3 N

T 2 N

LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Former BLM Lands now in Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area
- Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Boundary
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Mono-Long Valley K.G.R.A.Boundary
- Existing Fenceline
- Proposed Windmill, Storage Tank, and Trough

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

WALFORD SPRINGS WSA

CA-010-092

Existing Resources

MAP 42

Less than 1% of the area has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values, and little is known of its prehistory. The predicted cultural sensitivity for this unit is low to moderate based on regional use and settlement patterns. Seed collection appears to have been the primary focus throughout the area.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING

The WSA contains 1,600 acres of juniper which would be harvested for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood; 500 acres are accessible. Demand is low. It is estimated that less than 20 cords could be harvested annually.

LANDS

The entire WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931. This withdrawal restricts disposal of these public lands. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. The unit contains a 160-acre parcel of nonpublic land. Access to this inholding is not currently available. This WSA lies east and adjacent to the Inyo National Forest's Mono Lake Scenic Area which was congressionally designated under the California Wilderness Act of 1984 to preserve and protect the natural values of Mono Lake and its shoreline features.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The WSA has a low potential for metallic minerals, uranium, and thorium; no potential for nonmetallic minerals and oil and gas. There are no known mining claims. Mineral development potential for the aforementioned resources is nonexistent to low. The west half of the WSA is in the Mono-Long Valley Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) with pending geothermal lease applications; the WSA has a moderate to high potential for geothermal resources. Geothermal resource development potential is expected to be moderate because geothermal lease bids have been nominal, little exploration activity has occurred on these lands, and no geothermal resource has been identified.

Photo 15 - Walford Springs WSA

MORMON MEADOWS
(CA-010-094)

The Mormon Meadows WSA contains 7,280 acres of Bureau land. The majority of the unit is surrounded by Bureau land with portions of nonpublic land bordering all sides of the WSA. The WSA is located in the southwest corner of the Bodie Hills. The Bodie Hills straddles the transitional zone of the Basin and Range geomorphic province and the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province. One nonpublic parcel is located in the center of the WSA.

The unit encompasses an area of steep rounded volcanic hills dissected by a few intermittent drainages. Summit elevations rise to almost 9,000 feet. The area provides picturesque and scenic vistas of Mono Lake and its basin, which is a few miles south of the unit.

Grasses occupy the meadow areas, while desert shrub species dominate the drier areas. Pinyon pine, Utah juniper, and quaking aspen are also located in the unit. The south quarter of the WSA is uniformly covered with pinyon-juniper stands.

(See Map 43, p. 3-89.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The WSA has retained its primeval character and influence. The works of man are substantially unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole. These works include approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes, one spring development and some localized impacts to wetland areas from excessive livestock utilization in these areas. These imprints are imperceptible within the overall confines of this WSA.

Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are readily available throughout the WSA. The unit's size, enclosed canyons, interior valleys, and vegetative screening allow visitors to experience primitive recreation activities out of the sights and sounds of others.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Most primitive recreation activities would be well accommodated within the area. These include hunting, camping, horseback riding, etc. Scenic views of Mono Lake are available from within the southern fringes of the WSA.

Special Features

The WSA contains numerous special features. Sensitive plant species include *Phacelia monoensis* which is a candidate for the plant list. Several species of wildlife inhabit the area including mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse. The unit is considered crucial deer fawning habitat and crucial sage grouse nesting habitat.

VEGETATION

Perennial grasses dominate meadow areas while quaking aspen occupy many drainages. Pinyon and juniper dot many of the higher slopes and hilltops, adding color as well as vegetative variety to the scenery. Big sage and bitterbrush are also prevalent. A coordinated resource management plan is prescribed to identify and correct vegetative conditions for wildlife habitat, watershed protection and livestock forage.

Phacelia monoensis occupies 60 acres in the northern portion of the unit. This plant is a candidate for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service sensitive plant list. The population tends to occupy areas that have been disturbed. Potential habitat for this annual species exists adjacent to this population. Population stability is unknown.

GRAZING

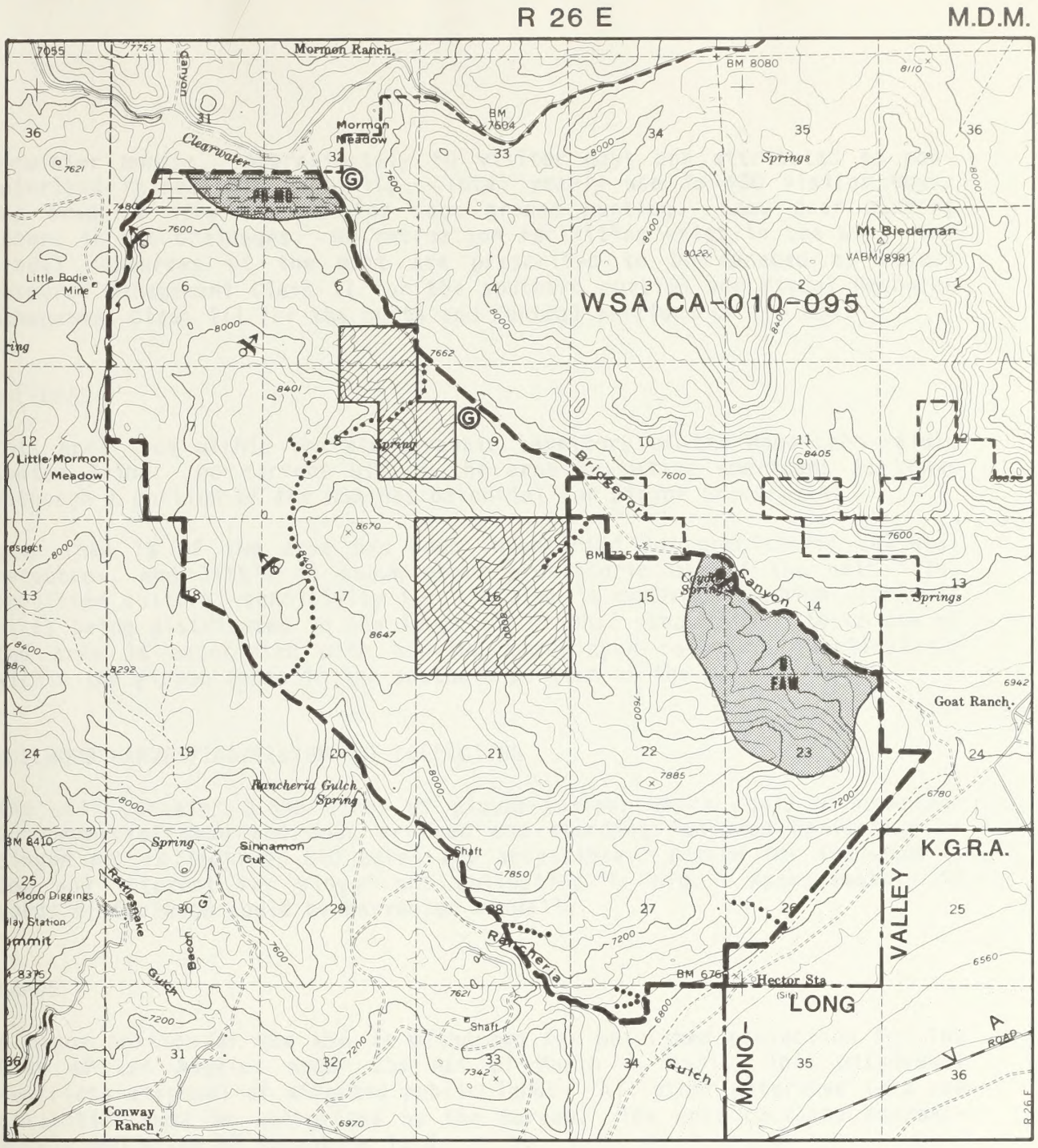
The WSA lies within the Rancheria Gulch Allotment, Little Mormon Allotment, and Mormon Ranch Allotment. Sheep grazing is occurring from June through September. The southern half of the unit has no sheep use. The remainder of the WSA has moderate use. The grazing system is a deferred rotation. A total of 526 AUMs are allocated in the WSA. There is one existing spring improvement in the WSA. Three spring developments are proposed to reduce sheep concentrations and to improve their distribution. Sheep operators require trucks and trailers to support their operations.

WILDLIFE

The unit contains deer and pronghorn antelope habitat, as well as a crucial deer fawning area. Containing yearlong sage grouse habitat, the area also provides several sage grouse strutting grounds and crucial nesting habitat. Existing meadows, springs, aspen groves, and streams with associated riparian zones are heavily utilized by wildlife. The riparian zone around Coyote Spring consists mostly of willow and aspen trees. Some localized impacts are occurring to these areas by sheep grazing. As part of the Bodie Hills, the area has been included in a coordinated resource management plan in order to identify areas and recommend corrective measures for wetland habitat being impacted by grazing particularly aspen groves along the east side of the WSA. This ongoing plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

RECREATION

The unit has several primitive vehicle routes which total approximately 4 miles. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposed designation of motor vehicle use in this area as open in the north third of the WSA (approximately 2,400 acres) and limited to existing routes and trails in the remainder. Use off existing vehicle routes is low. Snowmobile activity occurs in the area, mostly by local individuals. Snowmobile use is approximately 200 visitor days per year. There is an additional 150 visitor days per year related to motorized recreational access during



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Concentration of Mining Claims
- Mono-Long Valley K.G.R.A. Boundary
- Sage Grouse Strutting Ground (2 Mile Radius Nesting Area)
- Deer Fawning Habitat
- Phacelia monoensis
- Existing Spring Development with Trough
- Proposed Spring Development with Trough

MORMON MEADOWS WSA

CA-010-094

Existing Resources

MAP 43

nonwinter months. Approximately 50 visitor days are attributed to nonmotorized recreational activity. Total yearly use is 400 visitor days. The area is very popular for sage grouse hunting. Some deer hunting occurs in the drainages. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA. The visual resources of the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II for the southern portion and Visual Resource Management Class III for the north and central portions of the WSA.

CULTURAL

This area lies within the ethnographic territory of the Mono Lake Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known although a portion of the WSA has potential for pinyon procurement.

Less than 1% of the area has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural resources, and little is known about prehistoric use of the unit. The predicted cultural sensitivity for the area is moderate to high with most sites being distributed in the lower elevations. Known prehistoric use of the area is associated with hunting and pinyon collection particularly within the pinyon zones in the southern portion of the WSA.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The unit contains 3,500 acres of pinyon-juniper which could be used for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting; 840 acres are accessible. Demand for fuelwood is low and interest for pinyon nut collecting is high. Approximately 40 cords of fuelwood could be harvested annually.

LANDS

A major portion of the WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931. This withdrawal restricts disposal of affected public lands. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. The unit contains approximately 640 acres of nonpublic land.

MINERALS/ENERGY

There is a low potential for nonmetallic minerals and uranium. There is predominantly low potential for metallic minerals with a small zone of high potential along the extreme north margin of the WSA. There is no potential for thorium, and oil and gas. Mineral development potential for metallic resources is low, with moderate potential in the extreme north; for oil, gas, and thorium it is nonexistent. Approximately 30 mining claims are located in the WSA along the northern boundary. The unit has a high potential for geothermal resources; a very small portion of southeast corner of WSA has geothermal lease applications pending. Development potential for geothermal resources is moderate.

Photo 16 - Mormon Meadows WSA

MT. BIEDEMAN
(CA-010-095)

The Mt. Biedeman WSA contains 12,420 acres of Bureau land. The majority of the WSA is surrounded by Bureau land. Some parcels of nonpublic land border the south, west, and northeast edges of the WSA. The WSA occupies the south central portion of the Bodie Hills. The Bodie Hills lies at the west edge of the Basin and Range geomorphic province, adjacent to and slightly within the eastern periphery of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province.

This WSA is dominated by steep, rocky, and rounded volcanic hills with summit elevations ranging from approximately 8,000 to 9,022 feet. Mt. Biedeman, a rounded brush-covered mountain (8,981 feet), and two adjoining mountains occupy the central portion of the WSA, while an arc of pinyon-juniper-covered hills and interspersed canyons ring the southern periphery of the WSA. A few drainages dissect the northeast portion of the WSA. A few springs with associated meadows visually contrast with the surrounding arid environment. The WSA provides picturesque panoramic vistas of Mono Lake and the Eastern Sierra, primarily from the southern portion of the unit.

Vegetation in the WSA consists of pinyon-juniper associations located along the unit's southern boundary and dense understory of shrubs which is uniformly located throughout the unit. Perennial grasses inhabit the meadow areas.

(See Map 44, p. 3-95.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The WSA's natural values have been maintained with a few man-made imprints that are generally unnoticeable. The WSA's terrain, dense vegetation and size renders these imprints to a low level of visual contrast. These imprints include approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes, a few reservoirs, pipelines, and a cherrystemmed road in the northeast corner of the WSA. This road leads to some mining claims. Livestock overutilization in some wetland areas has resulted in site degradation. In addition, a wildfire in 1984 burned 150-200 acres northeast of Coyote Spring.

Solitude

There are outstanding opportunities for solitude throughout the WSA. The rugged hills, scenic quality, and natural character of the unit provide area visitors with a sense of isolation and the opportunity to attain unconfined freedom of movement. The outside influences of vehicle use on State Highway 270, which forms the northern boundary of the WSA, impair solitude along the WSA's edge.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are widely available in the WSA. These opportunities include hunting, backpacking, camping, nature appreciation, scenic photography, etc.

Special Features

Special features of uniqueness in the WSA include the sensitive plant candidate Phacelia monoensis; habitat for mule deer, sage grouse, and pronghorn antelope; and crucial nesting habitat for sage grouse as well as a crucial deer fawning area.

VEGETATION

Most of the WSA is covered by big sagebrush, bitterbrush, and perennial grasses. Plant density is high. Low sage is found on ridges and as interspersed islands within the big sagebrush type, displaying a mottled appearance. A stand of pinyon trees is located along the WSA's southern boundary. A coordinated resource management plan is prescribed for the area in order to improve vegetative conditions for wildlife habitats, to protect watersheds, and to provide livestock forage.

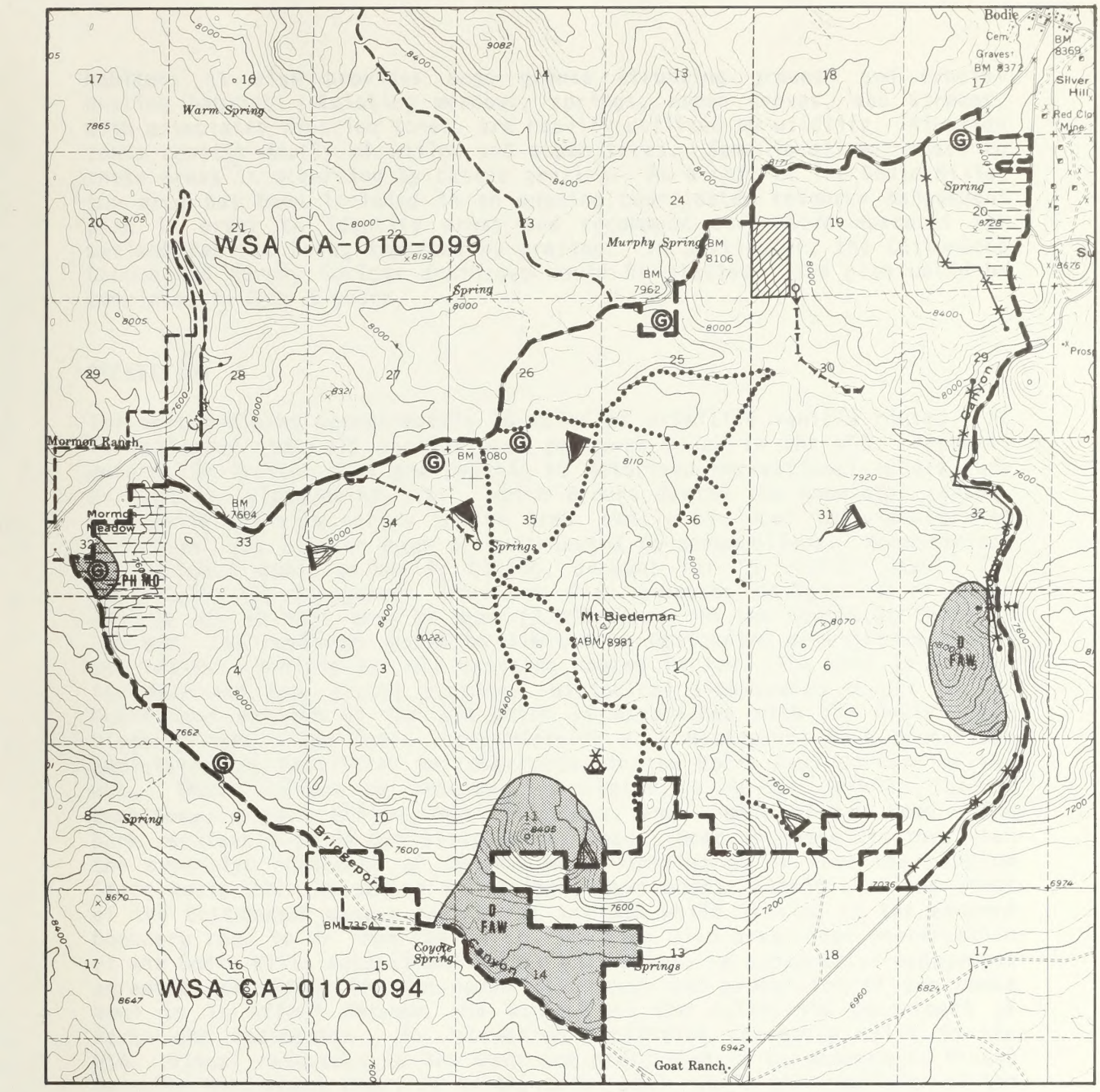
The extreme western portion of the unit contains a population of Phacelia monoensis, which is on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species list. The population contains less than 10 plants. There is also potential habitat (30 acres) adjacent to this population. This annual plant is growing on a previously disturbed site. The stability of the population is unknown.

GRAZING

The WSA lies within the Goat Ranch Allotment, Rancheria Gulch Allotment, Potato Peak Allotment, and the Bodie Mountain Allotment. Sheep and cattle grazing occurs from June through October. The western half of the WSA has light sheep use. The large basins in the north and east have moderate sheep use. Cattle use near Bodie State Historic Park is heavy. The allotment management plan prescribes a deferred rotation grazing system except in the Bodie Mountain Allotment which is designated as rest rotation. Sheep herders use trucks, trailers, and water trucks to support livestock operations. A total of 1,183 AUMs is available in the WSA. The WSA contains 4 miles of allotment boundary fencelines along the east edge of the unit. Two reservoirs are also in the WSA. Salt block placement is required. Two pipelines (totaling 2 miles), four reservoirs, and a 200-foot drift fence are proposed for improving sheep distribution. A windmill and water storage tank are proposed south of Mt. Biedeman to minimize water hauling to grazing areas.

WILDLIFE

The unit is considered part of a deer and pronghorn antelope habitat as well as a crucial deer fawning area. It contains yearlong sage grouse



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Primitive Vehicle Route

Concentration of Mining Claims

Sage Grouse Strutting Ground (2 Mile Radius Nesting Area)

Deer Fawning Habitat

Phacelia monoensis

Existing Fenceline

Proposed Fenceline

Existing Reservoir

Proposed Reservoir

Proposed Windmill, Storage Tank, and Trough

Proposed Pipeline and Trough

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA

CA-010-095

Existing Resources

MAP 44

habitat; it also provides sage grouse strutting grounds and crucial nesting habitat. Existing meadows, springs, aspen groves, and streams, with associated riparian zones, are heavily utilized by wildlife. Riparian zones consist mostly of willow and aspen trees. Some localized impact to these areas is occurring by cattle grazing. As a part of the Bodie Hills, the area has been included in an ongoing coordinated resource management plan in order to identify areas and recommend corrective measures for wetland habitat being impacted by grazing. In particular, the Cottonwood Canyon and Murphy Springs drainages would be studied. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

RECREATION

The unit contains approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes. It is estimated that 475 visitor days per year occur in the WSA. Approximately 250 visitor days are related to motorized recreational access such as hunting, sightseeing, etc., which occurs during the nonwinter season. Snowmobile activity occurs in the area, mostly by local individuals. An additional 200 visitor days are attributed to snowmobilers. Nonmotorized recreational uses, primarily hiking, account for 25 visitor days. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposes designation of motor vehicle use in this area as open (3,200 acres) in the northwest third of the WSA; the remainder would be limited to designated or existing routes and trails. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. The area is popular for deer and sage grouse hunting. Historical sightseeing occurs in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA which is associated with the Bodie State Historic Park. The Bodie State Historic Park Management Plan prescribes administrative facilities be constructed in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA. These include an interpretive center, a 40-car parking lot, a dormitory, a park office, two residences, and 1 mile of new road. The park receives over 72,000 visitors per year. Most of these visitors view the expansive landscape of the WSA while driving to or from the park on State Route 270. A number of visitors have scenic albeit confined views of the Cottonwood Canyon portion of the WSA while driving on the eastern boundary road to or from the park. The plan also prescribes preservation of the Bodie Hills natural and historical values. A cooperative management agreement providing for increased management and protection of the Bodie Bowl is in effect between the Bureau and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. No recreation facilities currently exist in the WSA. Visual resources in the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II in the Bodie Bowl, while the remainder of the WSA is designated as Visual Resource Management Class III.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The unit lies adjacent to Bodie State Historic Park. Bodie was a historic gold mining town between 1870 and 1900 which was instrumental in the Eastern Sierra's early settlement. There may be Bodie-related mining remnants in the northeast portion (Bodie Bowl) of the WSA.

This area lies within the ethnographic territory of the Mono Lake Paiute Indian Tribe. Local Native Americans may use the area for pinyon nut collection.

Approximately 3% of the WSA has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. Cultural sensitivity is predicted to be medium to high. Sites lying within the unit are primarily associated with hunting and seed collection, with higher sensitivities for the lower elevations. Small temporary camps associated with hunting and seed collection as well as obsidian collection sites occur in the lower elevation of the northern portion of the WSA.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The unit contains 2,300 acres of pinyon-juniper which could be used for noncommercial fuelwood harvesting or pinyon nut collecting; 450 acres are accessible. Demand for fuelwood is low and interest for pinyon nuts is high. Approximately 20 cords of fuelwood per year are available for harvesting.

LANDS

A portion of the WSA is withdrawn for watershed protection for the City of Los Angeles under the Act of March 4, 1931, and E.O. 5843. Both withdrawals restrict disposal of affected public lands. In addition, nonmetalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 5843. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau. The unit contains approximately 80 acres of nonpublic land in a desirable wetland area. Access is currently available. An inactive 200-foot telephone line right-of-way (1¼ mile in length) is located on the north edge of the WSA. This right-of-way is planned to be revoked due to inactivity. State Route 270 to Bodie State Historic Park forms the north boundary of the unit. Approximately 4½ miles of the State Route abuts the WSA. This road is located along portions of Clearwater Creek. The present road right-of-way is established at 60 feet wide (30 feet in each direction from centerline). Future emergency repairs may necessitate realignment of the route outside the present right-of-way and into the WSA up to a potential distance of 200 feet.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The unit has predominantly low potential for metallic minerals (approximately three claims in this area) with high potential in the northeast portion (Bodie Bowl) and extreme western portion (Mormon Meadows) of the WSA. Approximately 28 claims are in this high potential area. Metallic mineral development potential in the northeast portion is high and moderate in the extreme west portion of the WSA; development potential is low in the remainder of the WSA. There is low potential for uranium and nonmetallic minerals. Mineral development potential for uranium and nonmetallic minerals is low. There is no potential for thorium, oil and gas and no development potential for these resources. There is moderate to high potential for geothermal resources. Development potential for geothermal resources is low to moderate in the near future due to a lack of industry activity and a lack of strong surface indications of a viable geothermal resource. Pending geothermal lease applications exist along small portions of the WSA's northern boundary.

Environment

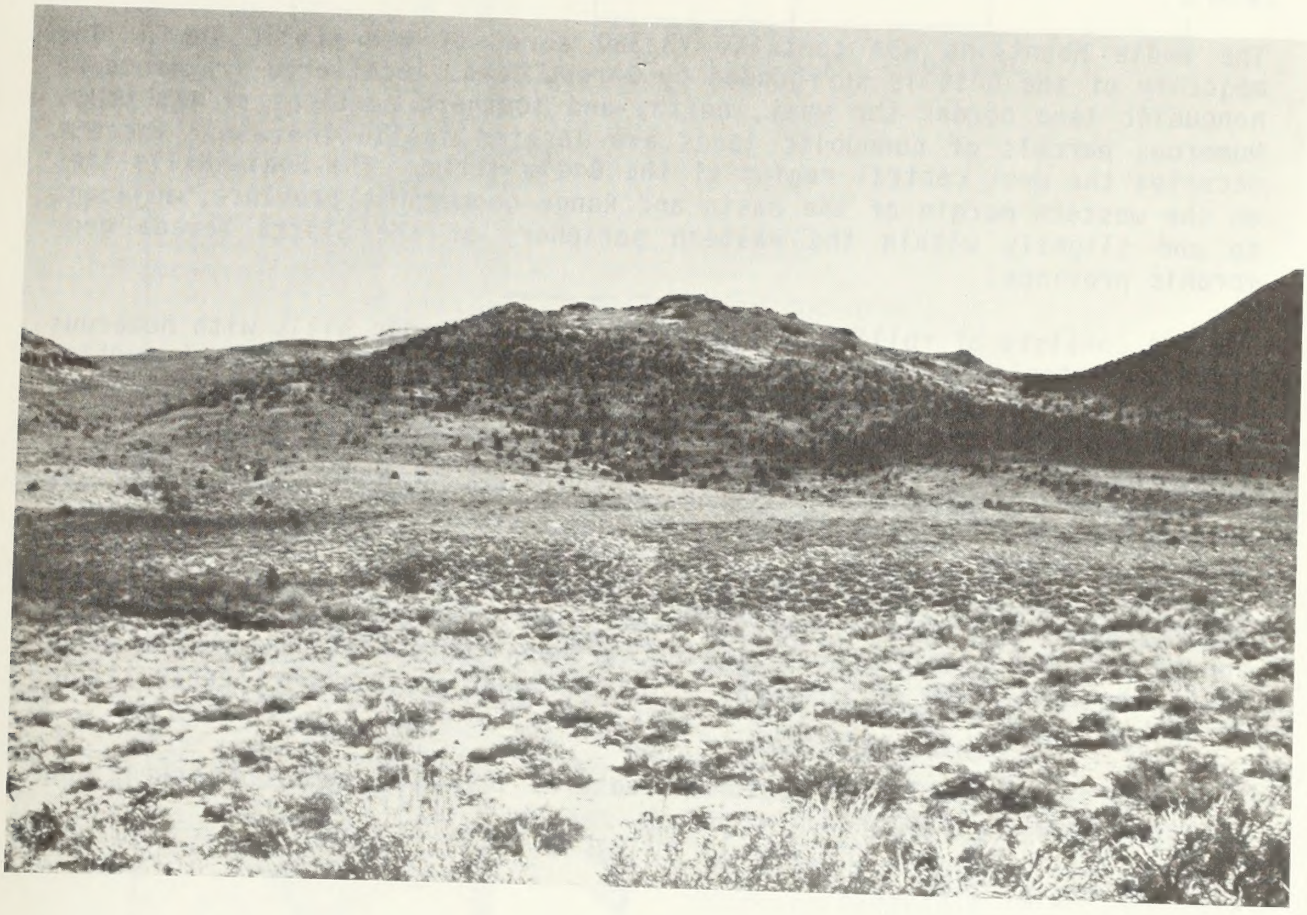


Photo 17 - Mt. Biedeman WSA

BODIE MOUNTAINS
(CA-010-099)

The Bodie Mountains WSA contains 23,360 acres of BLM public land. The majority of the unit is surrounded by Bureau land. Scattered fragments of nonpublic land border the west, north, and southern portions of the unit. Numerous parcels of nonpublic lands are located inside the WSA. The WSA occupies the west central region of the Bodie Hills. The Bodie Hills lies on the western margin of the Basin and Range geomorphic province, adjacent to and slightly within the eastern periphery of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province.

The WSA consists of rolling to steep and rocky volcanic hills with numerous canyons, interior drainages, and some meadows. The elevation of surface features in the WSA ranges from 7,500 feet in Big Alkali Basin to 9,300 feet along the east boundary of the WSA. Big Alkali, thought to be a volcanic caldera, occupies the center of the unit. Big Alkali contains several hot springs and a sizeable wetland area. Additional springs are located in the WSA. Clark Canyon Creek is a perennial water source supporting trout.

Vegetation is variable within the unit. Dominant throughout is grassland and various Great Basin shrub species. Pinyon-juniper stands are prevalent along the west half of the WSA. Riparian corridors support dense stands of quaking aspen.

The unit's combination of natural features provides numerous scenic and picturesque vistas.

(See Map 45, p. 3-101.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

Overall, the unit's naturalness has been well maintained. Although there are cherrystemmed roads which penetrate the WSA from the southern boundary, the unit's large size and extremely diverse terrain screen these intrusions. Excessive livestock use in some wetland areas has degraded site conditions. In Clark Canyon, gabions have been constructed to correct unnatural site conditions. In addition, other evidence of man's influence include approximately 16 miles of vehicle routes, a pipeline, six fences, two reservoirs, and a few mining claims. These features are substantially unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole. The magnitude of the features renders them to a low level visual contrast.

Solitude

The unit's blend of physiographic variation, vegetative screening, and extensive size provides the visitor with outstanding opportunities for solitude. Isolation can be easily found within most of the WSA. The use of cherrystemmed roads would impair opportunities for solitude along southern portions of the unit.

Environment

R 25 E R 26 E M.D.M.

T 5 N

T 4 N

WSA CA-010-095

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

SCALE 1:62,500

LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Concentration of Mining Claims
- Sage Grouse Strutting Ground (2 Mile Radius Nesting Area)
- Deer Fawning Habitat
- Waterfowl Habitat
- Peat Bog
- Phacelia monoensis
- Existing Fenceline
- Proposed Fenceline
- Exclosure
- Water Development (undefined)
- Existing Reservoir
- Proposed Reservoir
- Proposed Spring Development with Trough
- Proposed Spring Development, Pipeline, and Trough

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA

CA-010-099

Existing Resources

MAP 45

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The primeval and diverse nature of the unit's natural character provides visitors with outstanding opportunities to participate in primitive and unconfined recreational activities. Visitors can participate in activities such as backpacking, cross-country skiing, nature appreciation, scenic photography, camping, horseback riding, etc.

Special Features

The area contains diverse features of special interest. Historic features associated with Bodie State Park as well as prehistoric values are in the WSA. The unit supports a candidate for the sensitive species plant list. A unique sphagnum peat bog can be found in the WSA. Noteworthy wildlife values include habitat for pronghorn antelope, mule deer, sage grouse, and waterfowl. In addition, the area is crucial habitat for sage grouse nesting, as well as crucial habitat for deer and antelope fawning.

VEGETATION

The western half of the WSA is mostly a pinyon-juniper woodland with big sagebrush in the bottomlands. In the northeast corner there are numerous stands of quaking aspen. Dry and wet stringer meadows exist in the major drainages and around springs. The WSA's eastern half is rolling mountainous terrain with the bottoms and sideslopes covered with big sagebrush, bitterbrush, and perennial grasses. Vegetation condition is very good. Low sagebrush is found on the ridgetops and as interspersed islands within the big sagebrush, displaying a mottled appearance. A coordinated resource management plan has been developed that prescribes measures to improve vegetative conditions for wildlife habitat, protect watersheds, and increase livestock forage.

The unit contains two small populations along the southern boundary near Morman Meadows of Phacelia monoensis, a candidate species for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sensitive plant list. No other information is available on this population. The WSA also contains a unique sphagnum peat bog which is 60 feet in diameter and in excellent condition.

GRAZING

The WSA lies within the Travertine Hills, Aurora Canyon, Potato Peak, and Mormon Ranch Allotments. Cattle and sheep graze these areas between June and October. The majority of the WSA's west side has no grazing occurring. Moderate grazing occurs in the large basins where water is available. Heavy use occurs on dry and wet meadows. The grazing system is a deferred rotation. Livestock operators use trucks, trailers, and water trucks to support livestock operations. A total of 2,270 AUMs is available in the WSA. A 400-foot pipeline and exclosure, two reservoirs, and six fences totaling 12 miles are in the unit.

Proposed range improvements include two fences (totaling 6 miles), three pipelines (totaling 1¼ miles), two access improvements of existing primitive vehicle routes (approximately 3 miles) in the southern part of

the WSA near Cinnabar Canyon and West of Murphy Springs, and three spring developments. These projects would improve livestock distribution and reduce livestock concentration.

WILDLIFE

The WSA is considered spring, summer, and fall deer and pronghorn antelope habitat; it is also crucial deer and pronghorn fawning habitat. Clark Canyon supports rainbow trout. The unit contains sage grouse yearlong habitat, as well as strutting grounds/crucial nesting habitat. It contains the Mono Lake/East Walker mule deer migration corridor and also waterfowl habitat. Some meadows and aspen groves are receiving localized grazing impacts. Drainages, like Clark Canyon, have been excessively overgrazed and currently require watershed restoration. Six erosion control gabions and 200 feet of fence currently exist in Clark Canyon.

Proposed and ongoing rehabilitation of Clark Canyon Creek would increase numbers and improve distribution of trout, and would improve deer habitat. Six erosion control gabions and 400 feet of fence are proposed at this site. Throughout the WSA, proposed rehabilitation of three springs and one meadow would improve productivity and numbers of declining sage grouse populations. Deer would also benefit from the spring rehabilitations. This rehabilitation includes fence exclosures and erosion control gabions.

The coordinated resource management plan for the area directs that a vegetative treatment (probably a prescribed burn) be conducted to improve wildlife habitat and increase livestock forage on approximately 75 acres in Hot Springs Canyon. This treatment has been prescribed because the existing plant community has reached a climax condition precluding the growth of a herbaceous understory species which provides forage and cover for most wildlife species. Approximately 30 AUMs of additional forage would be provided for cattle.

RECREATION

The unit contains approximately 16 miles of primitive vehicle routes. These routes are used by the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual 4-wheel drive poker rally (approximately 100 visitor days per year) and for general sightseeing activities. Nearby Bodie State Historic Park receives in excess of 72,000 visitors per year. Most view the WSA to and from the park along the southern boundary road, State Route 270. Snowmobile activity (approximately 200 visitor days per year) occurs in the area, mostly by local individuals. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposes designation of the area as open for motor vehicle use. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. The area is very popular for sage grouse hunting (approximately 450 visitor days per year). Deer hunting occurs in the drainages. An additional 150 visitor days are related to motorized recreational access such as sightseeing and hunting. Total yearly use is 950 visitor days. Approximately 900 of these visits are related to motorized recreational access. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA. Visual resources of the WSA are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class III.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The WSA contains historic values associated with Bodie State Historic Park. This consists of the historic wood pole transmission line, which transects the unit on its way from Dynamo Pond to Bodie which is considered to have been the first facility in the world to transport electricity over a long distance. Bodie is a ghost town reminiscent of the "gold boom days" (1870-1900) which hastened the early settlement of the Eastern Sierra. In addition, a historic Chinese settlement is in the unit.

This area lies within the ethnographic territory of the Bridgeport Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known, although the potential exists for pinyon procurement.

Approximately 5% of this unit has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values, and cultural sensitivity is very high primarily in the upland areas and the western portion of the WSA. This unit lies in the heart of the Bodie Hills obsidian source, and most of the sites occurring here are associated with obsidian collection from both surface and quarry. Pinyon sites are also present in the area. Sites in the unit are randomly distributed as is typical of lithic procurement areas.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The unit contains 16,300 acres of pinyon-juniper; 1,620 acres are accessible. There is a potential for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood harvesting, and for pinyon nut harvesting. Demand is low for fuelwood; interest is high for pinyon nut harvesting by local individuals. Some illegal fuelwood cutting is occurring.

LANDS

A telephone line right-of-way is located along the southern edge of the WSA. The WSA contains 19 parcels totaling 2,120 acres, or 8% of the unit, of nonpublic land. State Route 270 to Bodie State Historic Park forms the southern boundary of the unit. Approximately 4 3/4 miles of this road lies along the WSA boundary. This route is located adjacent to Clearwater Creek which is susceptible to flash flooding and washouts. The present road right-of-way is established at 60 feet wide (30 feet in each direction from centerline). Future unforeseen emergency repairs may necessitate realignment of the highway into the WSA in order to meet minimum State standards. Realignment may encompass a distance of 200 feet from the road edge. A small portion of the WSA is withdrawn for the City of Los Angeles under E.O. 5843 to protect watershed resources. The order restricts the disposal of affected public lands and prohibits nonmetalliferous mining.

MINERALS/ENERGY

There is high potential for metallic minerals in the Cinnabar Canyon area; moderate potential for the Hot Springs Canyon area; low elsewhere. Metallic mineral development potential for gold is moderate in Cinnabar

Canyon and Hot Springs Canyon until adequate information becomes available on the quantity of recoverable gold in these areas. Metallic mineral development potential is low in the remainder of the WSA. There is predominantly low potential for nonmetallic minerals, with moderate potential in the Cinnabar Canyon area. There is low potential for uranium and thorium. Mineral development potential is low for nonmetallics, uranium and thorium. There is no oil and gas potential. There is primarily high geothermal potential with moderate potential in the northeast corner. Geothermal development potential is high in the Travertine Hot Springs area; moderate in the majority of the WSA due to minimal industry interest and a lack of strong surface indications of a viable geothermal resource. The northeast corner of the WSA is rated as having low development potential due to the aforementioned reasons and the lower geothermal resource potential in this specific area. A substantial portion of the WSA contains pending geothermal lease applications. Numerous mining claims are in the northeast, west and southern portions of the WSA (348 claims in the WSA). Homestake Mining Company and U.S. Steel are conducting active exploration activity in the Cinnabar Canyon area.

Photo 18 - Bodie Mountains WSA

BODIE WSA
(CA-010-100)

The Bodie WSA contains 15,455 acres of Bureau land. Alternating parcels of nonpublic and Bureau land border the south, west and east boundaries of the unit. Toiyabe National Forest is contiguous to the north and northeast. A few nonpublic parcels lie within the WSA.

The WSA occupies the northeast quarter of the Bodie Hills. The Bodie Hills lies on the western margin of the Basin and Range geomorphic province, adjacent to and slightly within the eastern periphery of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province. The unit is dominated by rocky, rounded volcanic hills ranging to 9,200 feet. Several perennial creeks have carved deep and narrow canyons in the western two-thirds of the unit. Several spring sources and associated wetland habitats can be found in the area. The Beauty Peaks plateau and Dry Lakes area, a small volcanic tableland with ephemeral lakes dominated by a 9,000-foot cinder cone, occupies the northeastern portion of the WSA. Beauty Peaks and the plateau contrast sharply with the subdued relief of surrounding terrain, particularly during twilight hours.

Vegetation in the unit includes common Great Basin shrubs with pinyon-juniper associations on upland slopes and canyon walls. Quaking aspen and willows line drainages with permanent water sources. The unit also provides wetland habitat for a diverse range of wildlife.

Varied topography, wetland values, and a highly primitive environment combine together to make this portion of the Bodie Hills the most scenic in the entire area.

(See Map 46, p. 3-109.)

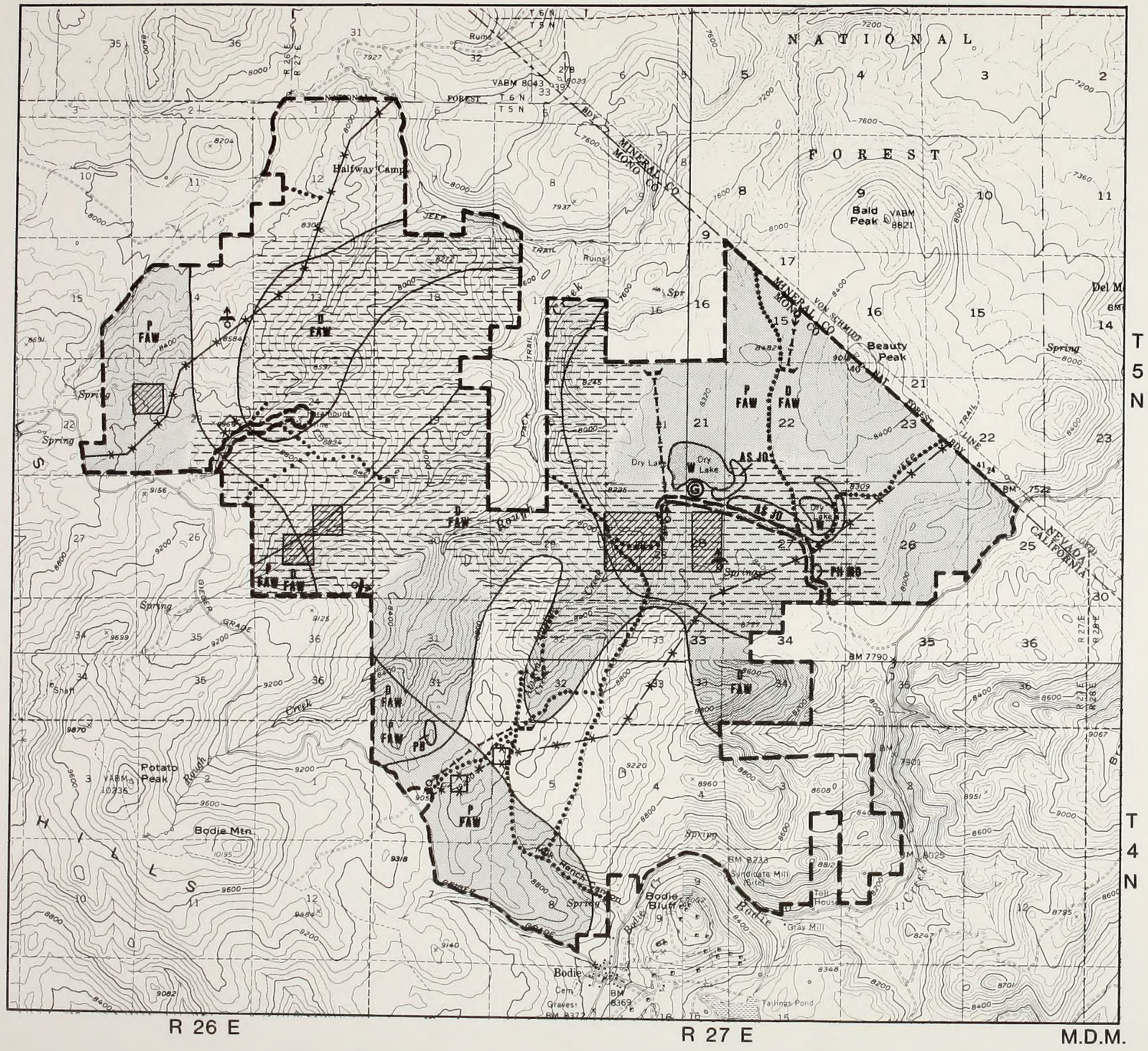
WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

The unit has retained its overall primeval character and influence, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. Unnatural features are visible on a local basis, but are small in magnitude in relation to the unit's size and topographic diversity. Unimproved, primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 18 miles are in the area. A cherrystemmed road leading to Paramount Mine exists in the west portion of the WSA. Some old mining prospects and associated surface disturbances dot this area. A few wildlife exclosures sit along the western edge of the WSA near Geiger Grade Road. Several miles of fence traverse the unit. Excessive livestock use in wetland areas has resulted in localized site deterioration.

Solitude

The unit's varied terrain, extensive size, and vegetative diversity cumulatively provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The deep canyons of Atastra Creek, Rough Creek and others additionally enhance



LEGEND

- WSA Boundary
- Private Lands within WSA
- Primitive Vehicle Route
- Concentration of Mining Claims
- Sage Grouse Strutting Ground (2 Mile Radius Nesting Area)
- Deer Fawning Habitat (D FAW)
- Pronghorn Antelope Fawning Habitat (P FAW)
- Waterfowl Habitat (W)
- Peat Bog (PB)
- Astragalus Johannis-howellii (AS JO)
- Phacelia monoensis (PH MO)
- Existing Fenceline
- Proposed Fenceline
- Existing Exclosure
- Proposed Spring Development with Trough
- Proposed Spring Development, Pipeline, and Trough
- Proposed Pipeline and Trough

BODIE WSA

CA-010-100

Existing Resources

MAP 46

opportunities to get away from it all. The rugged and primeval nature of Beauty Peak and the Dry Lakes plateau heightens a visitor's feeling of desolation.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The area contains abundant opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The Bodie Hills are reputedly known for their sage grouse hunting; this area of the Bodie Hills is one of the most popular. Hunters from all areas of California and portions of western Nevada hunt the area during open season. In addition, the area provides area visitors with opportunities for camping, historical sightseeing, geological sightseeing, wildlife study, backpacking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. The WSA is also quite popular with rockhounders.

Special Features

An abundance of special features can be found in the WSA. In addition to the geological and scenic values associated with Beauty Peak and the various creek drainages, the WSA is known for its diversity of wildlife values--primarily, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, and waterfowl. The WSA is crucial fawning habitat for deer and pronghorn, and crucial nesting habitat for sage grouse. A few sensitive plants are also located in the unit. Finally, the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA probably contains remnants of Bodie historical mining activity.

VEGETATION

Most of the bottomlands and sideslopes are covered by big sagebrush, bitterbrush, and perennial grasses. Plant density is high. Low sage is found on the ridges and as interspersed islands within the sagebrush, displaying a mottled appearance. There are dry and wet meadows in major drainages and around springs. The west slope of Rough Creek and dry rocky ridges support stands of pinyon-juniper. The deep drainages have numerous stands of aspen. Vegetation condition is very good. A coordinated resource management plan is prescribed for the area in order to improve vegetative conditions for wildlife habitat, to protect watersheds, and to improve livestock forage.

The unit contains a presence of Astragalus johannis-howellii (State-listed "rare"), and Phacelia monoensis, which is on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species list. Two major populations of Astragalus johannis-howellii exist with plants numbering in the thousands. The habitat is stable. One population of Phacelia monoensis exists. The population consists of sixty plants. The stability of the population is unknown. In addition, a unique sphagnum peat bog is located in the unit. No other information on the peat bog exists.

GRAZING

The WSA lies within the Bodie Mountain Allotment. Cattle graze from June 1 to October 15. A total of 2,823 AUMs is available in the WSA. Four miles of fenceline and three exclosures exist in the unit. The majority of the WSA has light to moderate cattle use. The allotment management plan prescribes a rest rotation grazing system. Some localized impacts are occurring to meadows and spring areas by cattle grazing. Proposed range improvements include three spring developments, three pipelines (totaling 3¼ miles), and 5 miles of fence. These range improvements would improve cattle distribution and effectuate the rest rotation grazing management systems.

WILDLIFE

The unit is considered spring, summer, and fall habitat for deer and pronghorn antelope; it is also crucial deer fawning habitat. The unit is part of a broad migration corridor for the East Walker mule deer herd. The unit contains sage grouse yearlong habitat; as well as strutting grounds and crucial nesting habitat in the Dry Lakes plateau area. Waterfowl habitat also exists in the Dry Lakes plateau area.

Streamside vegetation is generally dominated by willow, aspen, and wildrose. The herbaceous understory along a number of riparian sites has been, to varying degrees, degraded by livestock grazing. As a part of the Bodie Hills, the area has been included in a coordinated resource management plan in order to identify areas and recommend corrective measures for wetland habitat being impacted by grazing. In particular, Atastra Creek and Rough Creek as well as four associated tributaries would be studied. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

RECREATION

Approximately 18 miles of primitive vehicle routes are in the WSA. These vehicle routes are used by the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual 4-wheel drive poker rally sightseeing (100 visits per year) and for general sightseeing. Some snowmobiling activity occurs mostly by local individuals. Approximately 200 visitor days per year are attributed to snowmobilers. The area is very popular for sage grouse hunting (approximately 450 visitor days). Deer hunting occurs in the drainages. Some rockhounding activity occurs around the Beauty Peak/Dry Lakes plateau. An additional 250 visitor days are attributed to motorized recreational access such as rockhounding, hunting, etc. Total yearly use is 1,050 visits. Approximately 1,000 of these visits are related to motor vehicle use. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposes designation of motor vehicle use as limited to designated routes and trails in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA (approximately 1,100 acres); the remainder would be designated as open (approximately 14,355 acres). Vehicle use off existing routes is low. Historical sightseeing occurs in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA, which is generally associated with Bodie State Historic Park. Bodie is a ghost town reminiscent of the "gold boom era" (1870-1900) which contributed to the Eastern Sierra's early settlement. Bodie State Park receives over 72,000 visitors annually. Many of these visitors view the

Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA while visiting the park. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan prescribes interpretation for the historical values in the Bodie Bowl as well as preservation of the Bodie Hills natural and historical values. A cooperative management agreement between the Bureau and the California Department of Parks and Recreation provides for protection and management of public lands in the Bodie Bowl. No recreation facilities currently exist in the WSA. Visual resources are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II in the Bodie Bowl and Visual Resource Management Class III in the remainder of the WSA.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The southern portion of the WSA (Bodie Bowl) is adjacent to Bodie State Historic Park.

The WSA lies within the ethnographic territory of the Bridgeport Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of this area by Native Americans is known.

Less than 1% of this unit has been surveyed for prehistoric cultural sites. However, a portion of the Bodie Hills obsidian source lies within this WSA, and cultural sensitivity is predicted to be very high. Most sites within the area are associated with obsidian collection and pinyon nut harvest and are randomly distributed throughout the unit.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The unit contains 3,800 acres of pinyon-juniper; 480 acres are accessible; there is potential for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood or pinyon nut harvesting. Demand for fuelwood and pinyon nut harvesting is low.

LANDS

The unit contains approximately 360 acres of nonpublic land. Some parcels have access; one 80-acre parcel is accessed by a cherrystemmed road. A portion of the WSA is withdrawn for the City of Los Angeles for watershed resources protection under E.O. 5843. This withdrawal restricts disposal of affected public lands. In addition, nonmetalliferous mining is prohibited under E.O. 5843. All other watershed land use activities must be authorized by the Bureau.

MINERALS/ENERGY

There is moderate potential for metallic minerals in most of the WSA with high potential in the extreme southern portion and the area surrounding the Paramount Mine. There is low potential in the southern fifth and the extreme northern tip the of WSA. Metallic mineral development potential is commensurate with the area's mineral resource potentials. Low potential

exists for nonmetallic minerals; no potential for oil and gas. No to low potential exists for uranium and thorium. Development potential for nonmetallics, uranium and thorium is low; for oil and gas it is nonexistent. Moderate potential exists for geothermal resources; the western portion of the WSA contains pending geothermal lease applications. Geothermal resources development potential is considered low due to low industry interest, a lack of surface indications of a geothermal resource, and distance to a point of distribution areas. There is a dense staking of metallic mineral claims in the northern two-thirds of the WSA. The entire WSA contains approximately 485 mining claims.

Photo 19 - Bodie WSA

MASONIC MOUNTAINS
(CA-010-102)

The Masonic Mountains WSA contains 6,600 acres and is surrounded mostly by Bureau land. Some nonpublic lands adjoin the western and southern boundaries. The Toiyabe National Forest is contiguous to the north. Nonpublic land lies in the unit.

The WSA occupies the northwestern portion of the Bodie Hills. The Bodie Hills, lie along the western margin of the Basin and Range geomorphic province, adjacent to and slightly within the eastern periphery of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province. The unit is characterized by gentle to moderately rolling volcanic hills that slope toward Bridgeport Valley. Hilltop elevations range to 9,000 feet. A few drainages, most notably Rock Springs Canyon, dissect the unit.

The WSA is uniformly blanketed with pinyon-juniper associations except for the east and southwest portions. Understory species include Great Basin desert shrubs such as sagebrush and annual grasses.

(See Map 47, p. 3-117.)

WILDERNESS

Naturalness

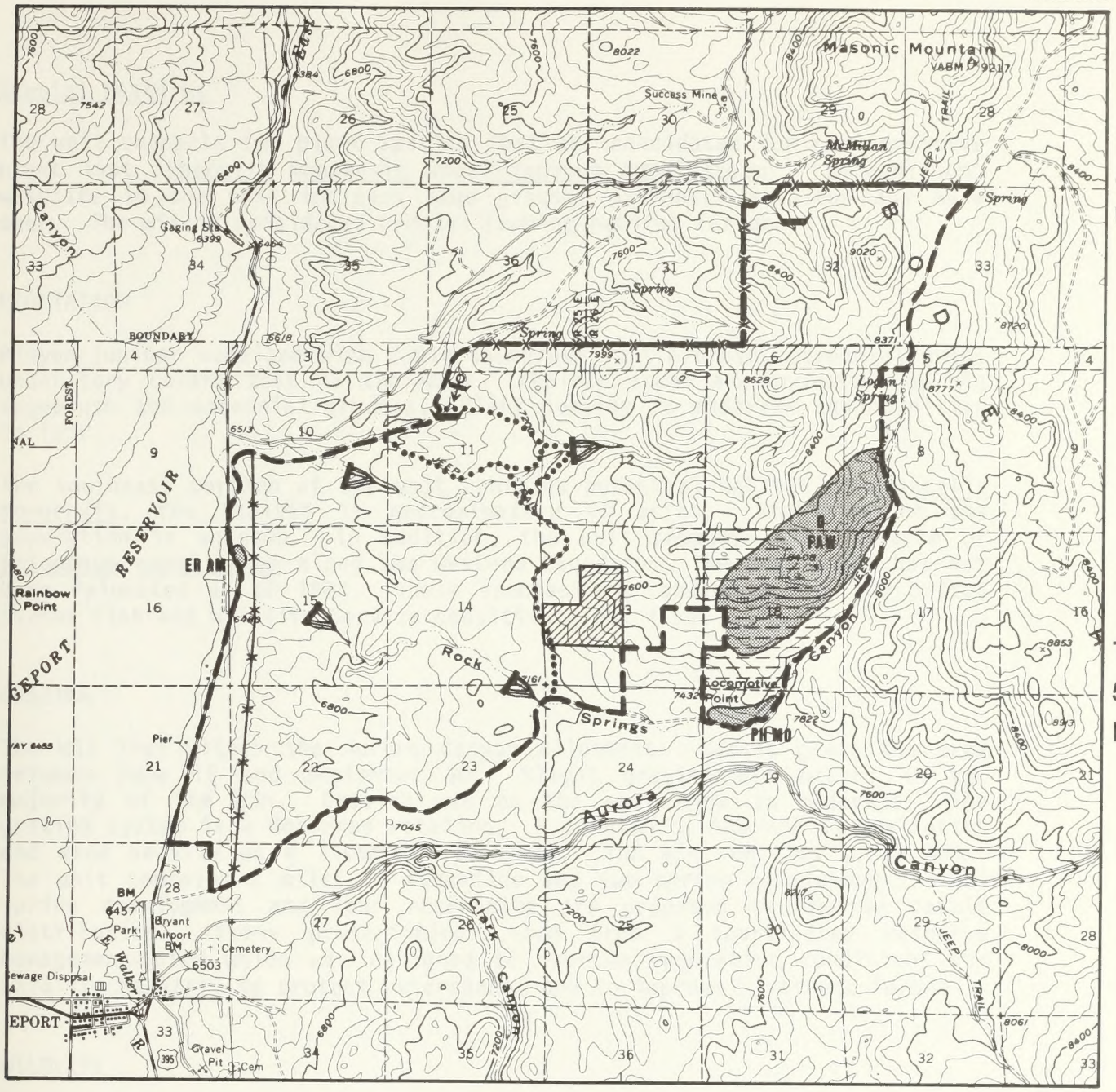
The unit is considered to be very natural, displaying a few man-made imprints which are substantially unnoticeable in the WSA as a whole. These imprints include approximately 4 miles of primitive jeep trails, a fenceline, and two spring developments. Excessive livestock utilization in some wetland areas is causing site degradation. These features are small in magnitude in relation to the unit's overall size, terrain diversity, and vegetative screening.

Solitude

The unit provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and isolation. Topographic diversity and vegetative screening provided by the pinyon-juniper stands combine together to screen out man's influences, thus enhancing opportunities for seclusion. The Bridgeport community and State Highway 182 are located along the west side of the unit.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The eastern portion of the WSA contains outstanding opportunities for sage grouse hunting--a very popular area during open season. In addition, the area provides outstanding opportunities for other primitive recreation experiences such as camping, hiking, horseback riding, etc.



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Private Lands within WSA

Primitive Vehicle Route

Concentration of Mining Claims

D FAW
ER AM
PIE MO

Deer Fawning Habitat
Eriogonum ampullaceum
Phacelia monoensis

Existing Fenceline

Existing Water Development

Proposed Spring Development with Trough

Proposed Reservoir

N

1 0 1 2 Miles

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MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA

CA-010-102

Existing Resources

MAP 47

Special Features

The unit supports two plant species that are candidates for the sensitive plant list (Phacelia monoensis and Eriogonum ampullaceum). In addition, wildlife in the unit includes sage grouse, pronghorn antelope and mule deer. The WSA is considered crucial fawning habitat for deer.

VEGETATION

Pinyon-juniper woodland with a big sagebrush, bitterbrush, perennial grass understory covers most of the WSA. Treeless areas are dominated by big sagebrush and perennial grasses. Plant density is moderate and condition is fair.

The southeast portion of the unit contains potential habitat for Phacelia monoensis, the habitat is approximately 40 acres. Stability of the population is unknown. In addition, the unit supports the presence of Eriogonum ampullaceum along the western boundary. The population has not been relocated as of 1984. These species are candidates for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service sensitive plant list.

GRAZING

The WSA lies within the Aurora Canyon Allotment. Cattle graze the area between June 15 and September 30. Slight grazing use occurs in the majority of the WSA. Grazing use on the east side is moderate. The grazing system is a deferred rotation. A portion of the WSA is unallotted and used heavily as a livestock driveway. The WSA contains 1,252 AUMs. The unit contains 3 miles of fenceline and two spring developments. One spring development and four reservoirs are proposed to improve cattle distribution. These prescriptions stem from a coordinated resource management plan which was designed to improve vegetative conditions for wildlife habitat, to protect watersheds, and to improve livestock forage.

WILDLIFE

The unit is considered spring, summer, and fall habitat for deer and pronghorn antelope in the east quarter of the WSA; it is also crucial deer fawning habitat. The area is part of the broad migration corridor for the East Walker mule deer herd. The area contains sage grouse habitat in the east quarter of the WSA. Some localized impact is occurring to springs by cattle grazing. The proposed rehabilitation of one stream in Rock Springs Canyon and of one spring in McMillan Spring area would improve deer fawning areas and deer spring, summer, and fall use areas. The proposed rehabilitation of the spring would also potentially improve productivity and fawn survival of pronghorn. Rehabilitation facilities would include exclosure fences and reestablishment of native vegetation.

RECREATION

There are approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes in the WSA. Vehicle routes are used by the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual 4-wheel drive poker rally sightseeing (approximately 100 visitor days per year) and for general sightseeing. Snowmobiling activity occurs in the area, mostly by local individuals (approximately 200 visits per year). There is deer hunting activity in the WSA. An additional 150 visitor days associated with vehicle use are related to hunting, sightseeing, etc. Approximately 450 visitor days are attributed to motorized vehicle recreational access. Total yearly recreation use is 475 visits. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposes designation of motor vehicle use in this area as open. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. Visual resources are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II.

CULTURAL

This area lies within the ethnographic territory of the Bridgeport Paiute Indian Tribe. No current use of the area by Native Americans is known, although potential for pinyon nut collecting is present.

Approximately 10% of this unit has been inventoried for prehistoric cultural values. Cultural sensitivity in the upland pinyon areas is very high with the remainder of the unit low to moderate. This unit lies in the core area of the Bodie Hills obsidian source, and most of the sites represent lithic procurement sites. Pinyon camps and big game hunting camps are also present.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The unit contains 4,100 acres of pinyon-juniper; 1,000 acres are accessible. There is a potential for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood and pinyon nut harvesting. Demand for fuelwood is low with approximately 40 cords per year available for harvest. Pinyon nut collecting by local individuals is occurring and interest is high.

LANDS

The unit contains approximately 120 acres of nonpublic land with access available. Portions of the southwest corner of the unit are proposed for intensive land uses, such as housing and commercial development for the Bridgeport Indian Colony. Adjacent to the southwest corner of the WSA the Indian Colony has a pending application for 40 acres under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

MINERALS/ENERGY

The unit has predominantly a low potential for metallic minerals with the northeast portion in the Masonic area considered moderate. Mineral development potential for metallic minerals is low to moderate. Potential for nonmetallics is moderate in west third of the WSA; the remainder is low. Mineral development potential for nonmetallic minerals, such as sand and gravel, is moderate in the west third of the WSA; the remainder is low. Low potential for uranium and no potential for thorium exists. No potential exists for oil and gas. Mineral development potential for uranium, thorium, oil and gas is either low or nonexistent. Geothermal resource potential is primarily moderate with high potential in the southwest corner of the WSA. Geothermal lease applications are pending in the southwest portion of the WSA. Geothermal resource development potential is considered low to moderate due to the low industry interest and lack of an identified geothermal resource. Approximately 21 mining claims are in the WSA; these are located in the eastern portion only.

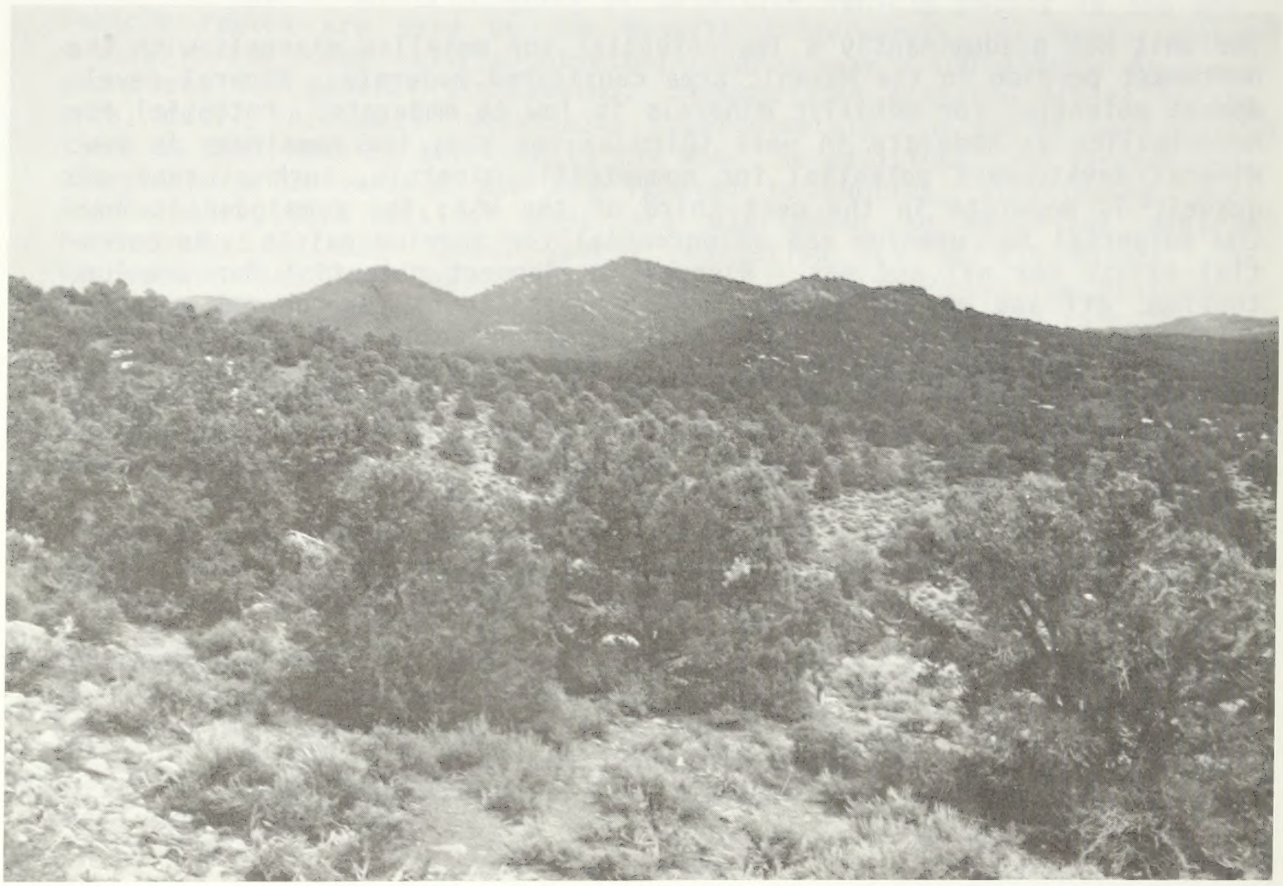


Photo 20 - Masonic Mountains WSA

SLINKARD
CA-010-105/NV-030-531

The Slinkard WSA contains 6,760 acres of BLM public land. The unit is bounded by nonpublic land and Bureau land to the east and west. Toiyabe National Forest is contiguous to the north and south. Nonpublic inholdings do not exist in the unit.

Subsequent to the release of the draft Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Environmental Impact Statement, 410 acres of adjoining "split-estate" public lands have been reincorporated into the WSA for analysis. The current acreage total reflects this change.

The unit lies at the extreme eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province. The WSA consists of a north-south trending mountain range which is dissected by numerous drainages and canyons. The east slope is rugged and steep while the west slope is more gentle and moderate.

Vegetation in the unit consists of Great Basin shrubs and perennial grasses. Dense stands of pinyon-juniper, white fir, quaking aspen, and Jeffrey pine occupy the unit.

(See Map 48, p. 3-125.)

WILDERNESS VALUES

Naturalness

Although a few scattered primitive vehicle routes totaling approximately 3 miles exist within the WSA, the overall area is very natural. A creek is undergoing some localized site degradation due to past livestock use. Lack of access to the WSA has facilitated the integrity of its naturalness.

Solitude

The WSA has limited opportunities for solitude. Although the unit's ruggedness and vegetative screening provide isolation within the unit, the opportunities are limited by the unit's vulnerability to adjacent or outside influences. The unit's ridgelike character and its very narrow linear shape make it susceptible to outside sights and sounds.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The unit contains opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation experiences. These opportunities include hunting, backpacking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, camping horseback riding, etc. The rugged and diverse terrain facilitates opportunities for different types of recreation experiences.

Special Features

Special features in the WSA consist of mostly wildlife. The unit is considered crucial deer fawning and crucial deer winter habitat. The Walker mule deer herd uses the WSA for cover and forage.

VEGETATION

The low elevation slopes are covered by big sagebrush, bitterbrush, and perennial grasses. Higher elevation slopes support a pinyon-juniper woodland with associated mountain mahogany. The steep-sloped drainages have stands of white fire, Jeffrey pine, and aspen. Vegetation condition is excellent.

GRAZING

The WSA lies within the Slinkard and Bagley Valley Allotments. Sheep and cattle graze the area from May to October. Livestock use is slight. The grazing system is season long. A total of 526 AUMs are within the WSA. No improvements exist or are proposed. Some channel erosion is occurring at Slinkard Creek Tributary No. 1 due to livestock use.

WILDLIFE

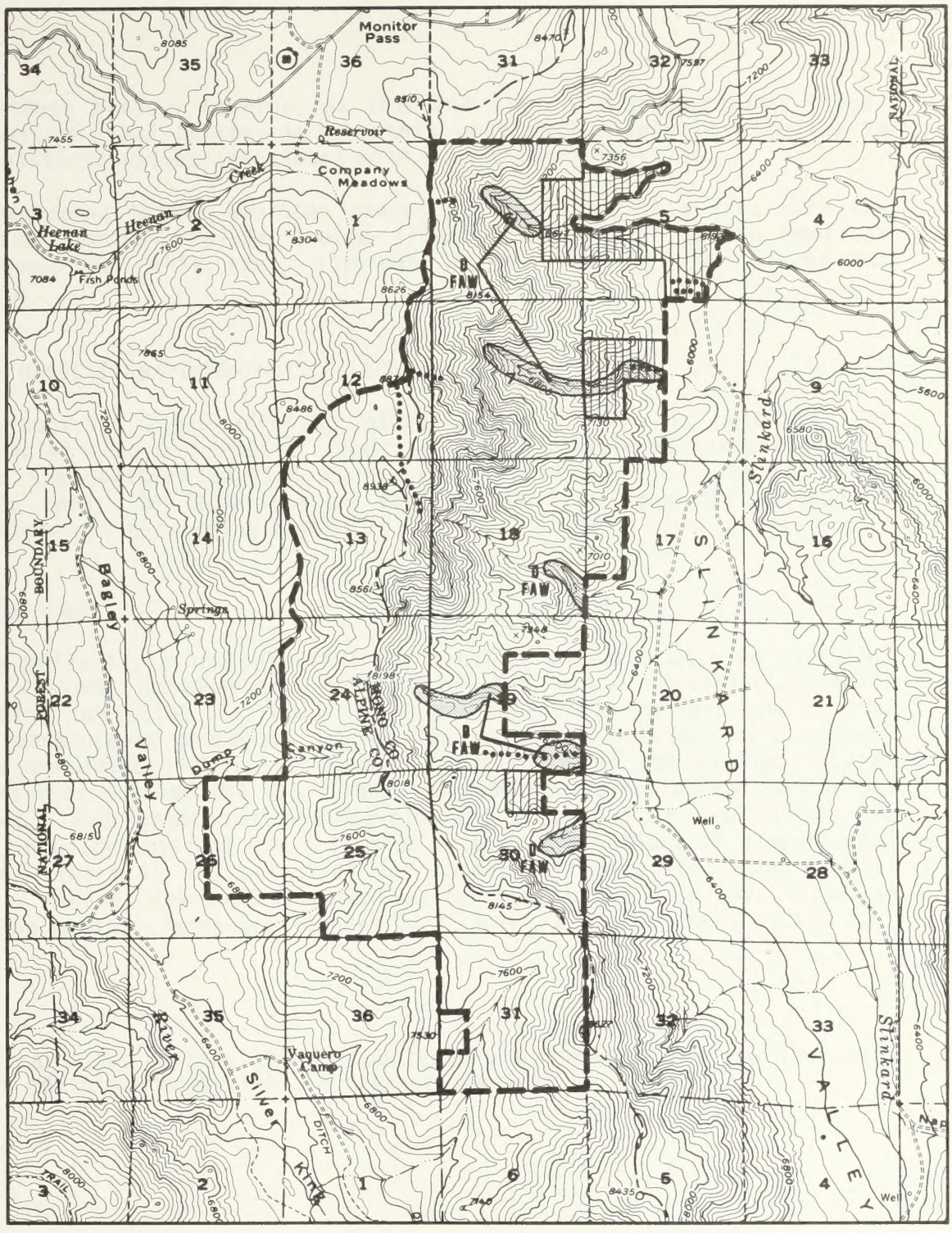
The area is considered spring, summer and fall habitat for mule deer. The east side of the WSA is identified as crucial winter habitat and a crucial deer fawning area. The majority of the West Walker deer herd (1,400-2,000 deer) migrate through the area. A habitat management plan is recommended for the herd. There are three major migration corridors running through the unit, and the area is considered a heavily used deer range. Black bears frequent the area. Rehabilitation for Slinkard Creek Tributary No. 1 is prescribed in order to stabilize channel erosion caused by livestock use. Erosion control gabions and planting of native vegetation is recommended.

RECREATION

The unit contains 3 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Low snowmobiling activity occurs on the west slope (less than 5 visits per year). Light deer hunting also occurs. Less than 100 visitor days occur in the WSA; 70 of these visitor days are related to motorized recreational access. The Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan proposes designation of motor vehicle use in CA-010-105 as open (4,340 acres). Very little recreation use, approximately 10 visitor days per year, occurs in CA-010-105 due to lack of access. WSA NV-030-531 vehicle use is limited to designated routes and trails. Nonmotorized recreation of approximately 30 visitor days, use primarily hunting, occurs in the northern portion of the WSA. Recreation facilities do not exist in this WSA. Visual resources of the unit are prescribed to be managed as Visual Resource Management Class II.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Less than 1% of the WSA has been inventoried for cultural resources, and very little is known about the prehistoric use of the area. Much of the WSA lies in extremely rugged terrain and the predicted site sensitivity is



LEGEND

WSA Boundary

Split Estate within WSA

Primitive Vehicle Route

Deer Fawning Habitat

SLINKARD WSA

CA-010-105 / NV-030-531

Existing Resources

MAP 48

low for these areas. However, as this WSA lies in a pinyon zone, ridgetops, terraces, and benches within this unit will likely have medium to high prehistoric values associated with pinyon nut harvesting.

The ethnographic Native American groups that utilized this area were the Washoe and Northern Paiute Indian Tribes. No current Native American use is known for this area, although it has potential for pinyon nut harvesting.

FUELWOOD HARVESTING/PINYON NUT COLLECTING

The WSA contains 2,810 acres of pinyon-juniper; there is potential for noncommercial dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood harvesting; 360 acres in the northern portion of the unit are accessible. The number of available cords for this type of fuelwood is less than 30. Demand is low. Pinyon nut harvesting demand is low.

MINERALS/ENERGY

There is primarily a low potential for metallic minerals with no potential in the extreme northeastern portion of the WSA. Metallic mineral development potential is low. Moderate potential for uranium exists. Uranium development potential is low due to the uncertainty of a mineral resource occurrence, depressed market conditions and the availability of known reserves outside the WSA. There is moderate potential for geothermal resources. Geothermal resource development potential is low due to the lack of industry interest and a lack of outward indications of a geothermal resource. There is low potential for nonmetallic minerals; none for oil and gas. Mineral development potential for nonmetallics is low. Eighteen unpatented mining claims are located in T. 9 N., R. 21 E., Secs. 1 and 12.

LANDS

The Slinkard WSA adjoins the Carson-Iceburg Wilderness Area to the south which is administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

Photo 21 - Slinkard WSA

Chapter 4

Environmental Consequences

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter focuses directly on the issues identified in Chapter 1. For each WSA the environmental impacts of each alternative are described issue by issue. The environmental impacts of these alternatives on the areas' other resources have also been analyzed and have been found to be insignificant.

Because of the general nature of this analysis and the lack of numerical and statistical information regarding the areas' resources, impacts in this chapter are often expressed in relative terms. For the purpose of this analysis the meanings of these terms are as follows:

- Negligible or slight impact - the degree of anticipated environmental impact is considered less than minor.

- Minor impact - comparatively unimportant; in terms of the area's wildlife resources, a minor impact is one affecting a specific group of individuals of a population in a localized area for one generation or less; the integrity of the regional population is not likely to be affected.

- Moderate impact - an effect sufficient enough to cause a change in the abundance of a resource or its distribution. In terms of the area's wildlife, the abundance or distribution of a portion of the regional or local population would change over more than one generation, but would not affect the integrity of the regional population as a whole.

- Major impact - an effect sufficient enough to cause a decline in the abundance of a resource or a change in distribution of a resource. In terms of the area's wildlife, the abundance or distribution of the regional or local population of a species would decline beyond which natural recruitment would not likely return that population to its former level within several generations.

SACATAR MEADOWS WSA
(CA-010-027)

PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS)

11,447 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,728 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, 11,447 acres would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 6,728 acres would not be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to wilderness values as well as motorized recreation use and livestock grazing.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under this proposal, 11,447 acres within the Sacatar Meadows WSA would be designated wilderness. The wilderness values on this portion of the WSA would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. The area's naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including habitat for a sensitive plant species (Phacelia novenmillensis) and a deer migration corridor would be protected and retained by wilderness management.

Wilderness values on the remaining 6,728 acres, primarily naturalness and solitude, would not receive special legislative protection and would be subjected to the effects of multiple-use management. The primary uses occurring within the WSA are livestock grazing and motorized recreation use.

Naturalness

Within the 11,447 acres of the WSA designated wilderness, closure of 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes and elimination of 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use would have a slight positive benefit on naturalness. Natural revegetation in this area would occur slowly over time.

Construction of two spring developments for wildlife and livestock use would locally result in negligible impacts to naturalness within the designated portion of the WSA. Surface disturbance for each project would be 25 square feet with the perception of naturalness impaired over an area of less than 1 acre each.

Livestock grazing would result in only negligible impacts within the designated portion as a result of the continued presence of 291 AUMs. A proposed 300-acre prescribed burn to increase forage on the north end of Scobie Meadow would not be permitted resulting in a retention of naturalness in this area.

Within the 6,728 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness the continuation of motorized recreation use on 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would maintain the presence of these routes and impair the perception of naturalness in the vicinity of the travel routes. However, this impairment would be very localized. A projected increase in motorized recreation use from the current 200 visitor days to 400 visitors would not result in any noticeable change in use of impacts as a result of the current low level of use.

A proposed 700-acre burn to increase forage production by 117 AUMs would increase use to 288 AUMs. There would be a short-term adverse impact as a result of the charred and blackened landscape along the WSA's boundary at the edge of Sacatar Meadow. This loss in the perception of naturalness on 1,200 acres surrounding the burn would not be visible from the majority of the WSA due to screening by an intervening ridge. The increased livestock use would have a negligible effect, if any, on the existing levels of naturalness.

Consequences

Solitude

The elimination of 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as vehicle use for infrequent fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting in the designated portion of the WSA would have a slight positive benefit on solitude within the 11,447 acres designated wilderness.

Construction of two spring developments to jointly benefit wildlife and livestock use would require the use of a vehicle for 4 days to complete both projects. Vehicle use would occur on existing primitive vehicle routes north of Scodie Meadow. There would be a short-term negligible impact on solitude within the vicinity of the two project sites and along the access routes over the 4-day period.

Maintenance of two existing and two proposed spring developments would have negligible impacts on the area's solitude as a result of three vehicle trips per year for inspection and maintenance. Three of the spring developments would occur within the wilderness portion of the WSA with the remaining development along the southwest boundary of the WSA in the nonwilderness portion.

Increased motorized recreation use within the 6,728 acres not designated wilderness would adversely impair the sense of solitude. Motorized recreation use would increase from the current 200 visitor days to a projected 400 visitor days resulting in a minor adverse impact within the vicinity of 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Since the MFP designates the area as limited to existing routes and trails, the increased use would be concentrated on these 4 miles of trails.

Activities associated with fuelwood harvesting including the use of chainsaws as well as motorized vehicles for both fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting would have only a negligible impact on solitude due to the infrequent and highly localized nature of use.

Activities related to the prescribed burn along Sacatar Meadow consisting of a helicopter and four support vehicles would locally disrupt solitude throughout an area of approximately 1,200 acres. This would result in a minor short-term impact over the 2 days required to complete the burn. Most vehicle use could occur along the boundary road outside the WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of 11,447 acres to motorized recreation use and the elimination of 300 visitor days of vehicle use would slightly enhance opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within the portion of the WSA designated wilderness.

Within the 6,728 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, the projected 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use would diminish the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation for those visitors close to the 4 miles of existing vehicle routes. The low level of existing uses as well as projected management actions throughout the WSA would marginally affect opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation which are currently limited due to the irregular configuration and narrow shape of the WSA.

Special Features

Special features of the WSA including sensitive plant habitat and a deer migration corridor would not be affected by the low level of existing uses or the proposed management actions. No activities are projected within the areas that these special features occur.

Conclusion:

There would be a slight benefit to wilderness values within the 11,447 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Elimination of 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use and prohibiting a 300-acre prescribed burn would help retain and maintain the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude.

On the 6,728 acres not designated wilderness, solitude and naturalness would be impaired as a result of continued motorized vehicle use and a 700-acre prescribed burn. Overall there would be only a slight impact to wilderness values throughout the WSA.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation of 11,447 acres of the Sacatar Meadows WSA would close this portion of the WSA including 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes to motorized recreation use. Closure would eliminate 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use. This use primarily involves hunting, sightseeing, and camping access. The majority of this use would be displaced to other public lands offering similar opportunities. However, approximately 100 visitors would continue to use the designated portion of the WSA without the motor vehicles. The nondesignated portion of the WSA would accommodate most of the remaining users as an alternative to being displaced to lands outside the WSA. While there would be a loss of motorized recreation use within the 11,447 acres designated wilderness the impacts are considered only minor due to the low level of use and opportunities to relocate use.

Within the 6,728 acres not designated wilderness, motorized recreation will continue on existing routes and trails as designated in the RMP. Approximately 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes will remain open and the current 200 visitor days of motorized recreation use is anticipated to increase to a total of 400 visitor days within a 10- to 15-year planning project. A portion of this increase would be a result of the 300 visitor days displaced from the wilderness portion of the WSA. Within the nondesignated portion of the WSA there would be no impact on motorized recreation use with use projected to increase.

Conclusion:

Overall, there would be only a minor impact to motorized recreation use as a result of designating an 11,447-acre portion of the WSA as wilderness with 300 visitor days foregone. Opportunities outside the WSA and within the 6,728 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness would accommodate displaced users. Use within the nonwilderness portion would continue and is projected to increase by 200 visitor days.

Consequences

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

Within the 11,447 acres of the WSA designated wilderness, livestock use would remain allotted at the current 291 AUMs. A 300-acre prescribed burn planned at the north end of Scobie Meadow would not be permitted and an increase of 50 AUMs would be foregone. The prescribed burn is planned as an opportunity to increase forage production and is not considered necessary to continue existing livestock operations. Two springs proposed within the designated portion would be developed to jointly benefit livestock use as well as to improve wildlife habitat.

A 700-acre prescribed burn planned within the 6,728-acre portion of the WSA not designated wilderness will be implemented. Livestock use would increase by 117 AUMs from the existing 171 AUMs to a projected 288 AUMs as a result of the prescribed burn. No other livestock facilities are proposed. Maintenance of two existing spring developments would continue.

Conclusion:

There would be only a minor impact to livestock grazing as a result of prohibiting a 300-acre prescribed burn in the wilderness portion of the WSA foregoing an increase of 50 AUMs. Overall livestock use would increase in the nondesignated portion by 117 AUMs as a result of a 700-acre burn. No other proposed projects would be eliminated.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

There would be only minor, short-term, unavoidable adverse impacts as a result of a 700-acre prescribed burn and continued motorized recreation use within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. In the designated portion of the WSA, construction of two spring developments would locally result in negligible adverse impacts. No other activities are anticipated that would result in any significantly adverse impacts in the WSA.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

Under the Proposed Action wilderness designation of 11,447 acres within the WSA would preclude existing motorized recreation use. However, all other current and projected short-term uses would continue and long-term productivity would be maintained.

On the 6,728 acres not designated all current short-term uses would continue and long-term productivity would not likely be impacted. Without wilderness designation the possibility of mineral development activities that could reduce long-term productivity is greater than under wilderness. However, no mining activity is projected due to low mineral potential and long-term productivity would be maintained.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

None of the existing uses or the projected management actions anticipated for the WSA would result in any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. Mineral development activities could create an irreversible commitment of the wilderness resource within the 6,728 acres not designated wilderness. However, based on the low potential for mineral development, no mineral activities are projected within the foreseeable future.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

18,175 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

The entire 18,175 acres of the Sacatar Meadows WSA would be designated wilderness under this alternative.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the protection of the wilderness values through wilderness designation and the resulting increases in naturalness, opportunities for solitude and primitive unconfined recreation. As a result of wilderness designation, livestock grazing is adversely impacted since planned vegetative manipulations to increase livestock use levels would not be permitted and motorized recreation use would be prohibited.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 18,175 acres of the Sacatar Meadows WSA would be designated wilderness. All wilderness values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation as well as special features including habitat for Phacelia novenmillensis, a USFWS candidate threatened and endangered species plant and a deer migration corridor would be retained.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness due to the closure of the area to vehicles, even though current motorized recreation use is low (500 visitor days). The existing 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes would slowly rehabilitate naturally although they would continue to be used as trails for nonmotorized recreation use which would increase from the current 300 visitor days to a projected 400 visitor days.

As discussed under the Proposed Action, construction of two spring developments to jointly benefit wildlife and livestock use would result in only 25 square feet each of surface disturbance. Only negligible impacts would occur locally with the perception of naturalness impaired over an area of less than 1 acre each.

Two prescribed burns totaling 1,000 acres for an intended increase of forage production of 167 AUMs would be prohibited allowing naturalness and the perception of naturalness to be retained within the project areas and surrounding viewsheds.

Consequences

Solitude

The elimination of 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use would have a minor positive effect on solitude within the WSA. Due to the low level and dispersed nature of vehicle use this would not significantly enhance the opportunities for solitude.

The prohibition of fuelwood harvesting as well as the use of motorized vehicles for pinyon nut collecting would have only a negligible effect on solitude. This use is infrequent and highly localized therefore no significant benefit would be realized. Pinyon nut collecting would continue without the use of motorized vehicles.

As described under the Proposed Action, construction and maintenance of proposed and existing spring developments would have only negligible impacts on solitude due to the limited and infrequent nature of associated vehicle use.

Precluding the two prescribed burns totaling 1,000 acres would retain the existing level of solitude and eliminate the short-term disruption resulting from helicopter use and support vehicles traveling along the boundary of the WSA near Sacatar Meadows.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use would slightly increase opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation throughout the WSA. No other actions or lack of actions would noticeably affect primitive and unconfined recreation.

Special Features

The effect of the All Wilderness Alternative on the special features of the WSA including sensitive plant habitat and a deer migration corridor would essentially be the same as the Proposed Action. However, wilderness designation would preclude continued motorized recreation use and any unforeseen surface-disturbing activities that could threaten these special features resulting in a slight positive enhancement.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation of the entire 18,175 acres within the Sacatar Meadows WSA would result in slight positive benefits to the wilderness values. Naturalness and solitude would be retained locally as a result of two prescribed burns totaling 1,000 acres. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use would result in a slight positive benefit to wilderness values, primarily solitude. Special features including sensitive plant habitat and deer migration corridors would be retained and slightly enhanced.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 18,175 acres would be closed to motorized recreation use including 14 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Wilderness designation would result in 500 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use that would be foregone. It is anticipated that approximately 100 of these visitors would continue to use the WSA for recreational interests, primarily hunting, without the use of motor vehicles. The west side of the WSA is either bounded or within close proximity (one-quarter to one-half mile) of existing vehicle routes that would provide access. There are no access points from the east along the crest of the Sierra Nevada. There would be a minor impact to motorized recreation use that would be shifted to other public lands with similar opportunities.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would close the entire 18,175 acres within the WSA to motorized recreation use eliminating 500 visitor days per year. This would result in a minor adverse impact as use would be displaced to other public lands outside the WSA.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

Wilderness designation of the entire WSA would prohibit both planned prescribed burns, one 300 acres for a projected increase of 50 AUMs and the other 700 acres for a projected increase of 117 AUMs. A total increase of 167 AUMs would be foregone and livestock use would remain at the current 462 AUMs. The loss of the projected increase in forage production would have a minor adverse impact on livestock grazing. However, existing livestock operations are not dependent on the proposed increase. The impact relates more to the opportunity to manage the WSA more intensely for grazing that would be lost. The two proposed spring developments and maintenance of two existing spring developments would continue as described under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact to livestock grazing. Precluding 1,000 acres of prescribed burns would forego the opportunity to increase forage production by 167 AUMs. Current livestock use would continue to be allotted at 462 AUMs.

NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
18,175 Acres Nonwilderness

This alternative would not designate any of the WSA's 18,175 acres as wilderness. The entire WSA would be managed for multiple use under the South Sierra Foothill RMP including an increase in livestock grazing use.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to wilderness values as a result of continued motorized recreation as well as prescribed burning and increased livestock use.

Consequences

Impacts on Wilderness Values

The No Wilderness/No Action Alternative would not provide special legislative protection for any of the wilderness values. Little development activity other than the proposed vegetative manipulation is anticipated in the short-term whether or not the area is designated wilderness. Motorized recreation use would continue.

Naturalness

Motorized recreation use (500 visitor days) would continue on 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes impairing the perception of naturalness within the vicinity of the routes. However, the South Sierra Foothills RMP designates the area as limited to existing routes and trails and the use levels are anticipated to remain low. Therefore, impacts to naturalness would be negligible as a result of continued vehicle use, other than maintaining the presence of existing routes..

As discussed under the Proposed Action, construction of two spring developments to jointly benefit wildlife and livestock use would result in only 25 square feet each of surface disturbance. Only negligible impacts would occur locally with the perception of naturalness impaired over an area of less than 1 acre each.

Two prescribed burns one 700 acres along the edge of the WSA north of Sacatar Meadow and the other 300 acres at the north end of Scobie Meadow in the southern portion of the WSA, would occur resulting in an increase of 167 AUMs. There would be short-term adverse impacts as a result of the charred and blackened landscape over the area of these burns. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over a total area of approximately 2,200 acres, confined to the small viewsheds surrounding each of the burns. The increased livestock use would have only negligible impacts on the existing level of naturalness primarily in the vicinity of the increased forage production as a result of the prescribed burns.

Solitude

Continued motorized recreation use (500 visitor days) would maintain the existing level of solitude in the vicinity of the 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes as a result of current vehicular use. No increases are projected for motorized recreation use which is anticipated to remain stable. This low level of use would render the impacts to low levels.

Activities associated with fuelwood harvesting including the use of chainsaws as well as vehicle use for both fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting would have only a negligible impact on solitude due to the infrequent and highly localized nature of this use.

As described under the Proposed Action, construction and maintenance of proposed and existing spring developments would have only negligible impacts on solitude due to the limited and infrequent nature of associated vehicle use.

Activities related to the prescribed burning along the Sacatar Meadow and north of Scobie Meadow each consisting of a helicopter and four support vehicles would locally disrupt solitude throughout an area of approximately 2,200 acres. This would result in a minor short-term impact over the 3 days required to complete the burn. Most vehicle use would occur either along the boundary road north of Sacatar Meadow or on primitive vehicle routes north of Scobie Meadow.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Continued low levels of use on the 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes would only marginally affect opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation beyond the existing levels. The low levels of other existing uses and projected management actions throughout the WSA would marginally affect opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, which are currently limited due to the irregular configuration and narrow shape of the WSA.

Special Features

Special features of the WSA including sensitive plant habitat and a deer migration corridor would not be affected by the low level of existing uses or the proposed management actions. No activities are projected within the areas that these special features occur.

Conclusion

The overall impacts on wilderness values would be minor throughout the 18,175-acre WSA. Locally, the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be diminished within an area of approximately 2,200 acres as a result of prescribed burning. Continued low levels of existing uses and the lack of proposed activities would not significantly affect wilderness.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under this alternative the entire 18,175-acre WSA would be open to use on the 14 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. The South Sierra Foothills RMP designated vehicle use within the WSA as limited to existing routes and trails. The current 500 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use is expected to remain stable.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is projected to remain stable at 500 visitor days per year.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

All proposed livestock grazing and range improvement projects could be implemented under the No Wilderness/No Action Alternative. A 300-acre prescribed burn and a 700-acre prescribed burn would increase forage production by 167 AUMs providing an opportunity to manage the WSA for more

intensive livestock use. Two proposed spring developments would occur and maintenance of two existing spring developments would continue as described under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on livestock grazing and range improvements. All planned projects would be implemented, including two prescribed burns on a total of 1,000 acres resulting in an increase of 167 AUMs.

CERRO GORDO WSA
(CA-010-055)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
16,102 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 16,102 acres within the Cerro Gordo WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts relate to how wilderness values would be affected by mining activity and geothermal development.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values on the 16,102 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features including the Inyo Mountain salamander, two sensitive plant species (Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis), and portions of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram. Naturalness and solitude would primarily be affected by mining activity and geothermal development under the Proposed Action.

Naturalness

Approximately 900 visitor days of motorized recreation use would continue on 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the WSA. The MFP prescribes the area as limited to designated or existing routes and trails. The continued use of these primitive vehicle routes would have a minor impact on naturalness as a result of maintaining their presence in the WSA. The perception of naturalness would be impaired in the vicinity of these existing routes. Since use is restricted to the existing routes and the steep nature of the terrain limits opportunities for travel off these routes, no new impacts from additional creation of routes is anticipated.

Construction of a wildlife guzzler would result in surface disturbance of less than one-quarter acre. Since the vegetation is primarily desert scrub species with low plant density the perception of naturalness would be

impaired locally over an area of up to 4 acres. However, due to the low profile nature of the guzzler and painting it to blend with the surroundings, this impact would be negligible.

Development of a projected silver mine in the western portion of the WSA would result in localized adverse impacts. Mining activities for the underground mine would result in 100 acres of surface disturbance for surface facilities such as portals, mine shafts, and air shafts, as well as a millsite and waste rock and tailings areas. Additionally, 8 miles of road would be constructed. Naturalness would be lost on approximately 115 acres as a result of mineral development and road construction. The impairment of the perception of naturalness would be highly localized due to the numerous canyons that would isolate the impacts. However, due to the lack vegetation mineral development would result in a moderate impact to the perception of naturalness within a viewshed of approximately 1,200 acres.

Geothermal exploration in the southwest portion of the WSA would result in 15 acres of surface disturbance including eight shallow hole drill pads, two deep temperature gradient holes and 2¼ miles of access roads. Exploration activities would result in a minor short-term impairment of the perception of naturalness. However, should exploration lead to development, it is anticipated that four of the drill pads would be developed with wellhead generation. Additionally, 1 mile of electric transmission line would be constructed. Overall there would be a minor adverse impact on naturalness due to geothermal development. These impacts and the perception of naturalness lost would be confined to less than a 1,000-acre viewshed within the lower slopes in the southern portion of the WSA due to the steep topography and deep canyons throughout the WSA that would tend to isolate the impacts.

Interpretive facilities along 3 miles of the Saline Valley Salt Tram would consist of post markers that would correlate with an interpretive brochure. Due to the inconspicuous nature of the posts along portions of the historic tram, there would only be very localized impacts on naturalness that would be very slight.

Solitude

Occasional vehicle use on 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would maintain the existing level of solitude, which has been slightly diminished by existing use, for visitors within the vicinity of the routes. However, the relatively low level of use (900 visitor days) and dispersed nature of use would result in only minor impacts. There are no increases projected for motorized recreation use which would result in additional impacts to solitude.

Construction of a wildlife guzzler would occur over a 3-day period and involve approximately three vehicle trips. Additionally, one vehicle trip would be required for annual inspection and maintenance of the guzzler. The impacts on solitude would be negligible and highly localized within the immediate vicinity of the one-quarter-acre project site and along the primitive vehicle routes used for access.

Consequences

Mining activity associated with operation of an underground silver mine would detract from the sense of solitude. Within a 1,200-acre area surrounding the mine solitude would be lost. Overall this would result in a minor impact to solitude within the WSA as a result of the very localized nature of the mining occurring in a steep canyon area of the WSA.

Geothermal activity associated with exploration and development would diminish solitude within the 1,000-acre viewshed of the facilities in the southern portion of the WSA. During active exploration and construction of production facilities solitude would be lost. However, once in full production, the sense of solitude in the vicinity of the facilities would not be impacted to the extent that exploration and construction activities result in a loss of solitude. Overall there would be a minor impact as a result of geothermal activity. The impacts would be very localized along the southern boundary of the WSA.

The reintroduction of bighorn sheep, a native species, would require the use of a helicopter for one day to transport sheep to a release site. This would result in a short-term disruption of solitude due to the helicopter noise. However, since this would only occur for one day the impacts on solitude would be negligible with the benefits of the reintroduction far outweighing any impacts.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited on 130 acres as a result of mining activities and geothermal exploration and development in the south and southwest portions of the WSA. Continued low levels of motorized recreation use (900 visitor days) would occur primarily on 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes and only negligibly affect opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to the extensive opportunities afforded by the WSA's highly diverse terrain and size these impacts would be insignificant overall.

Special Features

The special features of the WSA including sensitive plant habitat for Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis, the Inyo Mountain salamander and the remnants of the Saline Valley Salt Tram would not be significantly impacted, if impacted at all, by the continued low level of motorized recreation use or the projected mining activity and geothermal development. The remnants of the Saline Valley Salt Tram would be vulnerable to theft and vandalism as a result of continued motorized recreation use. However, due to the rugged nature of the primitive vehicle routes and difficulty of access only isolated cases of negligible impacts, if any, would occur.

Conclusion:

The wilderness values of the Cerro Gordo WSA would be subjected to a minor overall impact by not designating the WSA as wilderness. The primary adverse impacts would be highly localized and considered moderate.

Mining activities and geothermal development would result in a loss of naturalness on 130 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired over an area of 2,200 acres. Primitive and unconfined recreation would be diminished within the mining and geothermal development areas and by continued motorized recreation use which would also result in negligible impacts to naturalness and solitude. Special features would be retained except for possible negligible impacts to the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram due to continued motorized recreation use and vehicular access.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action all motorized recreation would continue on designated or existing routes and trails as prescribed in the Benton-Owens Valley MFP. Vehicle use would continue on the 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the 16,102-acre WSA. Motorized recreation use is anticipated to remain stable at 900 visitor days per year for activities including hunting, camping, and sightseeing.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use. Projected use is anticipated to remain stable at the current 900 visitor days per year.

Impacts on Mineral Development

The entire 16,102 acres within the WSA would be open to mineral entry. The WSA is generally considered to have no potential to a low potential for mineral resources. However, there is a small area of high potential for metallic minerals in the western portion of the WSA with a moderate probability for development of an underground silver mine resulting in 100 acres of surface disturbance. No other mineral development is projected within the WSA. There would be no impact on mineral development under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on mineral development. Under the Proposed Action the entire 16,102-acre WSA would be open to mineral entry. However, only an underground silver mine is projected for the western portion of the WSA.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

The entire 16,102 acres within the WSA would be open for mineral leasing including geothermal resources. The WSA predominantly has a low potential for geothermal resources. There is, however, a small area of high potential in the southwest portion of the WSA. Geothermal exploration could lead to the development of four wellhead generators for production. No other geothermal exploration or development activities are projected within the WSA.

Consequences

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on geothermal resource development. The entire 16,102 acres would be open for geothermal exploration and development. Only a small development is projected that would consist of four wellhead generators.

Impacts on the Inyo Mountain Salamander

There are two unnamed springs in the central portion of the WSA that provide habitat for the Inyo Mountain salamander, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species. Although this habitat is within the area of mining claim concentration in the WSA, the only mining activity projected for the WSA, an underground silver mine, would be located approximately 2 miles southwest of the habitat areas. The Proposed Action would permit continued mineral exploration throughout the WSA. In the unlikely event that mineral development were to occur in the immediate vicinity of the springs, a surface inventory would be completed prior to surface disturbance to identify potential mitigation measures to assure there would be no impacts, with the habitat being avoided or that any impacts would be minimized. There is no livestock grazing within the WSA and none projected. Motorized recreation use is limited to existing or designated routes and trails with no vehicle use occurring in the vicinity of the habitat areas and no increases in use projected. Therefore, negligible impacts, if any, would occur in relation to the Inyo Mountain salamander without wilderness designation.

Conclusion:

There would be only negligible impacts on the Inyo Mountain salamander, if any, as a result of potential future mining activities. There are no management actions projected that would impact either the populations or the habitat.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

Mining activities and geothermal development would lead to unavoidable adverse impacts to wilderness values as a result of 130 acres of surface disturbance. Continued motorized recreation use would not result in any significant adverse impact due to the low level of use which is projected to remain stable and is confined primarily to 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes.

The Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness all present short-term uses would continue. For the Cerro Gordo WSA there are many ongoing uses including motorized recreation, hiking and wildlife habitat management. Under the Proposed Action projected mining activities and geothermal development would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 130 acres. For the remainder of the WSA future development options would remain open and long-term productivity is not likely to be impacted.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Mining activities and geothermal development could create an irreversible commitment of the wilderness resource on 130 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the mineral and geothermal resources. Throughout the remainder of the WSA, no irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources are projected.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

16,102 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the All Wilderness Alternative the entire 16,102 acres within the Cerro Gordo WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts relate to the prohibition of mining activities, geothermal development, and motorized recreation use and the associated benefits to wilderness values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

All of the WSA would be designated wilderness and wilderness values within the entire 16,102 acres would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values would be retained including naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and the special features that include the Inyo Mountain salamander, two sensitive plant species (Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis) and the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram. Should valid existing rights be established, mineral development would impact wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness in the WSA as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. The current 900 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be eliminated and the 10 miles of existing vehicle routes would be allowed to rehabilitate naturally. However, in this arid desert scrub landscape, revegetation would be a very slow process, leaving the routes as reminders of past vehicle use.

Construction of a wildlife guzzler would result in only negligible local impacts as less than one-quarter acre of surface disturbance would occur as described under the Proposed Action.

There is a low to moderate probability that a projected mineral discovery and associated valid existing rights would be established. Should this occur the development of the anticipated underground silver mine would cause the direct loss of naturalness on 115 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired on 1,200 acres. There would be a highly localized moderate impact as described under the Proposed Action. Should a discovery not be made and no mining activity occurs, naturalness within the 1,200-acre viewshed would be retained and there would be a positive benefit to naturalness within the WSA.

Consequences

Wilderness designation would preclude potential geothermal activity. Naturalness would be retained in the southwest corner of the WSA within the 1,000-acre viewshed of the potential geothermal development particularly on the 15 acres of projected surface disturbance.

Interpretive facilities along 3 miles of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram would not be developed. Naturalness would not be affected.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude within the WSA as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. The current 900 visitor days of vehicle use would be eliminated. However, due to the low level of use which is primarily occurring on 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes, this would not significantly enhance the outstanding opportunities for solitude within the WSA.

As described under the Proposed Action there would be only negligible impacts on solitude as a result of vehicle use associated with construction and maintenance of a wildlife guzzler and the use of a helicopter to release bighorn sheep for reintroduction into the WSA.

Development of an underground silver mine would locally result in the loss of solitude in the western portion of the WSA as described under the Proposed Action. However, should valid existing rights not be established and mining activities are prohibited, solitude would be retained within the 1,200-acre area surrounding the projected mine site.

The prohibition of geothermal development in the WSA particularly anticipated activity in the southwest portion of the WSA would retain the existing sense of solitude within the 1,000 acres surrounding the potential geothermal development.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the entire WSA to motorized recreation use would slightly improve opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within the WSA. Should mining activities occur opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited on 115 acres in the western portion of the WSA. However, should valid existing rights not be established, mining would be prohibited and opportunities would be retained. Prohibition of geothermal development would retain opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation on 15 acres in the southern portion of the WSA.

Special Features

The special features of the WSA, sensitive plant habitat for Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis, the Inyo Mountain salamander, and remnants of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram would be retained under the All Wilderness Alternative and slightly enhanced. However, without wilderness designation, only continued motorized recreation use would threaten the Saline Valley Salt Tram.

Conclusion:

The All Wilderness Alternative would result in positive benefits to wilderness values due to designation of the entire 16,102 acres. Naturalness and solitude would be significantly retained locally as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use and geothermal development. Additionally, should mining be precluded, naturalness and solitude would be retained within the projected mining area. However, if a mineral discovery occurs and valid existing rights can be established (low to moderate probability) there would be a moderate localized impact on naturalness and solitude within the 1,200-acre viewshed surrounding the projected mine site. Special features and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be slightly enhanced.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

All 16,102 acres within the WSA including 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motorized recreation use. The current 900 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. Access opportunities into the Inyo Mountains are limited, however the WSA is bounded on the south by the primary access route to the mining remnants of the town of Cerro Gordo which would remain open. In addition, the road to New York Butte would remain open. The loss of 900 visitor days within the WSA would result in only minor impact to motorized recreation users.

Conclusion:

There would be only minor impacts to motorized recreation users who would still have access along the boundary road to Cerro Gordo and New York Butte. Wilderness designation would result in 900 visitor days per year foregone.

Impacts on Mineral Development

The entire 16,102-acre WSA would be closed to mineral entry. While the WSA is generally considered to have no potential to a low potential for mineral resources, the opportunity to develop an area of high metallic mineral potential in the western portion of the WSA would be foregone. There is a low to moderate probability of a silver discovery that would lead to development of an underground mine resulting in 100 acres of surface disturbance. Due to the uncertain nature of the existence of a yet undiscovered silver deposit impacts on mineral development are not considered significant and would only be minor.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on mineral development as a result of wilderness designation. The potential for mineral resources is none to low with an area of high potential for metallic minerals. There is only a low to moderate probability of a silver discovery that would result in a determination of valid existing rights leading to development.

Consequences

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

The entire WSA would be closed to mineral leasing including geothermal resources. There is a moderate probability that exploration of the southwest portion of the WSA which has a high potential for geothermal resources would lead to the development of four wellhead generators for small-scale production. This production would be foregone under the All Wilderness Alternative. The remainder of the WSA has a low potential for geothermal resources and no exploration or development activities are anticipated. There would be a less than minor impact on geothermal resource development due to the small-scale production and only moderate probability of development. Additionally, the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) forecasts a lack of demand for additional electric power sources.

Conclusion:

There would be less than a minor impact on geothermal resource development. Exploration and development of geothermal resources including a moderate probability of a small-scale production utilizing four wellhead generators would be foregone.

Impacts on Inyo Mountain Salamander

Habitat for the Inyo Mountain salamander occurs at two unnamed springs within the central portion of the WSA. While there are no projected management actions that could likely impact this species under any of the management scenarios for the WSA, wilderness designation would assure that mining claims in the vicinity would not be developed and that motorized recreation use would be prohibited. Therefore, with any potential threat reduced, there would be a slight positive benefit for the Inyo Mountain salamander.

Conclusion:

While there are no surface disturbances or other disruptive activities projected that would likely affect the Inyo Mountain salamander, wilderness designation would preclude any potential threats to the populations or habitats. Therefore there would be a slight positive benefit.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

14,222 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
1,880 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 14,222 acres within the Cerro Gordo WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 1,880 acres would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts relate to the benefits to wilderness values within the wilderness portion as well as how wilderness values would be affected by mining activity and geothermal development within the nonwilderness portion.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under this proposal, 14,222 acres of the Cerro Gordo WSA would be designated wilderness. Wilderness values on this portion of the WSA would be protected by legislative mandate. The wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including the Inyo Mountain salamander, two sensitive plant species (Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis) and the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram would be retained.

Within the 1,880 acres not designated wilderness the values of naturalness and solitude would be affected by mining activity and geothermal development as well as continued motorized recreation use.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of closing the 14,222 acres designated wilderness to motorized recreation use. Approximately 500 visitor days of vehicle use would be eliminated and 6 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would be allowed to rehabilitate naturally. However, in this arid desert scrub landscape, revegetation would be a very slow process, leaving the routes as reminders of past vehicle use.

Construction of a wildlife guzzler would occur in the designated portion of the WSA resulting in only negligible, local impacts with less than one-quarter acre of surface disturbance as described under the Proposed Action.

Although mineral development has not been projected within the designated portion due to low to nonexistent mineral potential, wilderness designation would most likely preclude any development of approximately 30 mining claims. The probability of valid existing rights applying to these claims is low.

Within the 1,880 acres in the southwest portion of the WSA not designated wilderness, approximately 400 visitor days of motorized vehicle use would continue and increase by 200 to a projected total of 600 visitor days due to closure of the designated portion of the WSA. The MFP prescribed vehicle use as limited to designated or existing routes and trails of which 4 miles exist in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. The continued use of these primitive vehicle routes would have a minor impact on naturalness as a result of maintaining the presence of the routes. The perception of naturalness would also be impaired within the vicinity of these routes. Since use is restricted to the existing routes and the steep nature of the terrain limits opportunities for vehicle travel off these routes, no new impacts from the creation of additional routes due to casual use is expected.

Consequences

Development of a projected silver mine in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA would result in the direct loss of naturalness on 115 acres. As described under the Proposed Action, mineral development would result in a moderate impact to the perception of naturalness within a viewshed of approximately 1,200 acres in the western portion.

Geothermal development in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA as described under the Proposed Action would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 15 acres. There would be a minor impact on naturalness as geothermal development would impair the perception of naturalness in an area confined to less than 1,000 acres in the southern portion of the WSA.

Interpretive facilities would be developed along 1 mile of the Saline Valley Salt Tram in the nondesignated portion. Installation of post markers would be inconspicuous along portions of the historic tram, resulting in very localized impacts on naturalness that would be very slight. Interpretive facilities would be precluded in the wilderness portion of the WSA.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude within the 14,222 acres designated as wilderness as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use in this portion of the WSA. Approximately 500 visitor days of vehicle use would be eliminated. However, due to the low level of use which is primarily occurring on 6 miles of existing primitive routes, this would not significantly enhance solitude within the portion of the WSA designated wilderness.

As described under the Proposed Action there would be only negligible impacts on solitude in the designated portion of the WSA as a result of vehicle use associated with the construction and maintenance of a wildlife guzzler and the use of a helicopter to transport bighorn sheep to a release site in the designated portion of the WSA for reintroduction into the WSA.

Within the 1,880 acres of the WSA in the southwest portion of the WSA not designated wilderness, motorized recreation use would continue and increase from the current 400 visitor days to a projected 600 visitor days as a result of closing the designated portion of the WSA. This increased use on 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would result in a negligible impact on solitude over the current levels of solitude which are slightly diminished due to existing use. However the low level of existing and projected motorized recreation use would not significantly disrupt the outstanding opportunities for solitude within the WSA.

Mining activity associated with a projected underground silver mine, and geothermal exploration and development would diminish solitude on 2,200 acres surrounding the project sites. As described under the Proposed Action the impacts to solitude would be minor due to the highly localized nature of the activities.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Within the 14,222 acres of the WSA designated wilderness, the prohibition of motorized recreation use would sightly enhance opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. There are no other activities within the designated portion of the WSA that would affect, adversely or beneficially, primitive and unconfined recreation.

Primitive and unconfined recreation within the 1,880 acres in the southwest portion of the WSA not designated wilderness would be limited on 130 acres as a result of mining activities as well as geothermal exploration and development. Continued and increased motorized vehicle use on 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes in this portion of the WSA would only negligibly affect primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to the extensive opportunities afforded by the WSA's highly diverse terrain and size, the impacts would be insignificant overall.

Special Features

All identified special features would be in the designated portion of the WSA with the exception of 1 mile of the remnants of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram. This portion of the tram would be vulnerable to vandalism and theft as a result of continued motorized recreation use. However, only negligible impacts, if any, would result due to the rugged nature of the primitive vehicle routes and difficulty of access.

Within the 14,222 acres designated wilderness, the remaining 2 miles of the Saline Valley Salt Tram, sensitive plants (Eriogonum eremicola and Perityle inyoensis), and the Inyo Mountain salamander would be retained. Wilderness designation would also slightly enhance the special features by precluding potential threats.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would have a slight positive benefit to wilderness values on 14,222 acres as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. Within the 1,880 acres not designated wilderness, mining activity and geothermal development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 130 acres. There would be a moderate impact on the perception of naturalness and solitude on 1,200 acres as a result of mining activities. Geothermal development would result in a minor impact on the perception of naturalness and solitude within 1,000 acres surrounding the development.

Additionally, increased motorized recreation use within the nonwilderness portion would negligibly impact wilderness values including potential threats to portions of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram, a special feature of the WSA. Throughout the remainder of the WSA special features would be retained and slightly enhanced within the wilderness portion. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited on 130 acres within the nonwilderness portion. In the designated area, primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities would be slightly enhanced.

Consequences

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation of 14,222 acres of the WSA would prohibit motorized recreation in this portion of the WSA. Approximately 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use foregone. This loss could be absorbed on public lands outside the WSA. Access along the southern boundary to the mining remnants of the town of Cerro Gordo and the road to New York Butte would remain open. Only a minor impact would result from wilderness designation of this portion of the WSA.

Motorized recreation use would continue on the existing 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the 1,880 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness. Existing use of 400 visitor days would increase by 200 to a projected 600 visitor days as a result of closure of the wilderness portion of the WSA. The 7 miles of primitive vehicle routes to remain open provide the primary access to the interior of the WSA.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would close approximately 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes within 14,222 acres of the WSA. All motorized recreation use within the wilderness portion of the WSA would be prohibited resulting in 500 visitor days of use foregone. The remaining 1,880 acres would remain open to motorized recreation use on 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes with use projected to increase from the current 400 visitor days to 600 visitor days per year. Overall, only a minor impact would be incurred due to access opportunities outside the WSA.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Wilderness designation of 14,222 acres would withdraw this portion of the WSA from all forms of mineral entry. Approximately 30 mining claims occur within the designated portion of the WSA. However, these claims are in areas considered to have no potential or a low potential for occurrence of mineral resources and no development is projected. The probability of valid existing rights applying to these claims is low. Therefore, these claims would become invalid and all activity would cease. Impacts on mineral development in the wilderness portion of the WSA would only be minor due to the low mineral potential and lack of identified mineral resources.

Within the 1,880 acres not designated wilderness the area would be open to mineral entry. As described under the Proposed Action, development of an underground silver mine would occur in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. There would be no impacts on mineral development in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would only be minor impacts on mineral development in the 14,222-acre wilderness portion of the WSA due to low mineral potential at best and the lack of identified mineral resources. Within the 1,880 acres not designated wilderness there would be no impact with development of an underground silver mine projected.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral leasing including exploration and development of geothermal resources on 14,222 acres of the WSA. This portion of the WSA has only a low potential for geothermal resources as well as a low development potential. It is anticipated that no resource production would be foregone. Therefore, there would be no impacts on geothermal resource development in the wilderness portion of the WSA.

Within the 1,880 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, geothermal leasing, exploration, and development would be permitted. This portion of the WSA is considered to have a high potential for geothermal resources with development of four wellhead generators projected for small-scale production of electricity. There would be no impact on geothermal resource development within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on geothermal resource development under the Partial Wilderness Alternative. Development of small-scale production is anticipated within the 1,880 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness. While exploration and development would be prohibited within the 14,222 acres designated wilderness, this portion of the WSA has a low potential for geothermal resources with a low development potential. Therefore, it is anticipated no resource production would be foregone.

Impacts on the Inyo Mountain Salamander

The two unnamed springs providing habitat for the Inyo Mountain salamander are located within the 14,222-acre portion of the WSA that would be designated wilderness. As described under the All Wilderness Alternative, there would be a slight positive benefit by precluding the threat of any potential mining activity or motorized recreation use that could potentially impact the population or habitats.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would provide a slight positive benefit to the Inyo Mountain salamander.

SOUTHERN INYO WSA
(CA-010-056)

PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS)

27,420 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
9,180 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, 27,420 acres of the Southern Inyo WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 9,180 acres would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and would be managed for multiple use.

Consequences

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to wilderness values and the effects of projected mining activity and continued motorized recreation use within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA as well as the benefits to wilderness values and the prohibition of motorized recreation use within the designated portion of the WSA.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under this proposal, 27,420 acres within the Southern Inyo WSA would be designated wilderness. The wilderness values on this portion of the WSA would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. The area's wilderness values include naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including stands of bristlecone pine trees, the Inyo Mountain salamander (a candidate species), as well as remnants of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram and the Pat Keyes Trail, a historic mining trail.

Wilderness values on the remaining 9,180 acres, primarily naturalness and solitude, would receive no special legislative protection and would be subjected to the effects of multiple-use management. The primary uses occurring within the WSA are mining and motorized recreation use.

Naturalness

Within the 27,420 acres designated wilderness, closure of 5 miles of primitive vehicle routes and elimination of 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use would have a slight positive benefit on naturalness. The 5 miles of existing vehicle routes would be allowed to rehabilitate naturally. However, in this arid desert scrub landscape revegetation would be a very slow process, leaving the routes as reminders of past vehicle use.

Construction of two wildlife guzzlers would occur in the designated portion of the WSA near Burgess Well and French Spring. Surface disturbance would total approximately one-quarter acre for both projects. Since vegetation is predominantly desert scrub and plant density at both sites is sparse, the perception of naturalness would be impaired locally over an area of up to 4 acres each. However, due to the low profile nature of the guzzlers and painting them to blend with the surroundings, this impact would be negligible.

Although mineral development has not been projected within the designated portion of the WSA due to low to nonexistent mineral potential, wilderness designation would close the area to mineral entry. Any unforeseen potential for mineral development would be precluded and naturalness would be retained.

Interpretive facilities would not be constructed in the designated portion of the WSA which includes 2¼ miles of the Saline Valley Salt Tram and 6 miles of the Pat Keyes Trail. Therefore naturalness would not be affected.

Within the 9,180 acres along the western periphery of the WSA not designated wilderness, approximately 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use would continue with an increase of 200 visitor days as a result of prohibiting vehicle use in the wilderness portion of the WSA. Total motorized recreation use would amount to 600 visitor days within the non-wilderness portion of the WSA. The MFP prescribes vehicle use as limited to existing routes and trails for this portion of the WSA of which 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes exist. The continued use of these primitive vehicle routes would have a minor impact on naturalness as a result of maintaining their presence. The perception of naturalness would also be impaired within the vicinity of these routes. Since use is restricted to existing routes and the steep nature of the terrain limits opportunities for vehicle travel off these routes, no new impacts from the creation of additional routes due to casual use is expected.

There is a low to moderate probability that an underground silver mine would be developed in the southern portion of the WSA near Swansea Road in the nondesignated area. Construction of 8 miles of road and mining facilities including portals, mine shafts, air shafts, a millsite, as well as waste rock and tailings disposal, would result in localized adverse impacts. Naturalness would be lost on 115 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired within a 500-acre viewshed at the very southern portion of the WSA along the boundary. Since the mining activity would essentially be isolated from the entire 36,600-acre WSA except for the 500-acre viewshed, the overall impact on naturalness within the entire WSA would be negligible.

Interpretive facilities along one-half mile of Saline Valley Salt Tram in the southeast portion of the WSA in the designated area would consist of post markers correlated with an interpretive brochure. Due to the inconspicuous nature of the posts, there would only be very localized impacts on naturalness that would be very slight.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude within the 27,420 acres designated as wilderness as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use in this portion of the WSA. Approximately 600 visitor days of vehicle use would be eliminated. However, due to the low level of use which is occurring primarily on 5 miles of primitive vehicle routes, this would not significantly enhance solitude within the wilderness portion of the WSA.

Construction of the two wildlife guzzlers in the designated portion of the WSA would occur over a 3-day period and involve three vehicle trips for each project. The impacts on solitude resulting from the total of 6 days of vehicle use would be highly localized within the immediate vicinity of the two project sites and along the primitive vehicle routes used for access.

The reintroduction of bighorn sheep, a native species, would require the use of a helicopter for one day to transport 25 to 30 sheep to a release site within the wilderness portion of the WSA. This would result in a

short-term disruption of solitude due to the helicopter noise. However, since this would only occur for one day, the impacts on solitude would be negligible with the benefits of the reintroduction outweighing any impacts.

Within the 9,180 acres along the western periphery of the WSA not designated wilderness, occasional motorized recreation use would continue on 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Motorized recreation use in this portion of the WSA is anticipated to increase from the present 400 visitor days to a projected 600 visitor days. This increased use would detract from the existing level of solitude which has been diminished by present use. Overall the relatively low level of use and dispersed nature of use on existing routes would result in only minor impacts to solitude.

Mining activity associated with the development of a projected underground silver mine in the extreme southern portion of the WSA in the nondesignated area would detract from the sense of solitude. Within a 500-acre area that surrounds the projected mine site, solitude would be lost. Overall, this would result in a minor impact to solitude within the WSA as a result of the very localized nature of the mining occurring at the very south end of the WSA isolated from the remainder of the WSA due to the canyon nature of the surrounding landscape.

Vehicle access to a 72-acre patented mining claim south of Long John Canyon would disrupt solitude along an existing primitive vehicle route. This would infrequently result in very negligible impacts to solitude along the vehicle route due to the low level of use which occurs approximately four times a year when access needs exist.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Within the 27,420 acres designated wilderness, the prohibition of motorized recreation use would slightly enhance opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation use which centers primarily on hunting, hiking and sightseeing interests. There are no other activities within the designated portion of the WSA that would affect, adversely or beneficially, the outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Primitive and unconfined recreation within the 9,180 acres not designated wilderness would be limited on 115 acres as a result of mining activities in the extreme southern portion of the WSA. Continued and increased motorized recreation use on 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would only negligibly affect primitive and unconfined recreation along the lower slopes of the western periphery of the WSA. Due to the extensive opportunities throughout the WSA particularly at the upper elevations along the crest, afforded by the highly diverse terrain and size, the impacts would be insignificant overall.

Special Features

All special features within the 27,420 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would be slightly enhanced. These special features include stands of bristlecone pines along the crest of the Inyo Mountains near the eastern boundary of the WSA, the Inyo salamander, as well as remnants of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram and portions of the Pat Keyes Trail, a historic mining trail.

Within the nondesignated portion of the WSA the only special feature is portions of the Saline Valley Salt Tram. Motorized recreation use could threaten approximately one-half mile of the tram due to potential vulnerability to theft and vandalism of the remnants. However, there is limited vehicular access to the tram which climbs over steep terrain. The threat of potential impacts is considered minor. Prior to mineral development in the southern portion of the WSA a survey would be required to identify the location of the tram in order to assure mining activity avoids this National Register feature or that potential impacts are mitigated. However, while the Saline Valley Salt Tram is adjacent to the anticipated mining development, it is not within the projected area of surface disturbance. Therefore, potential impacts are not anticipated.

Conclusion:

Under the Proposed Action all wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced within the 27,420 acres designated wilderness by eliminating motorized recreation use. Negligible localized impacts would occur as a result of constructing two wildlife guzzlers with the perception of naturalness impaired on a total of 8 acres.

Within the 9,180 acres not designated wilderness motorized recreation use would result in negligible impacts to naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation. Projected mineral development would result in a loss of naturalness on 115 acres with solitude and the perception of naturalness impaired on 500 acres in the southern portion of the WSA. Overall the impacts to wilderness values under the Proposed Action would be negligible.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action, 27,420 acres would be closed to motorized recreation use including 5 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Wilderness designation of this portion of the WSA would result in 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use per year foregone. This use is primarily associated with hunting, sightseeing, and camping. The upper elevations of the WSA would only be accessible by foot. Access opportunities into the Inyo Mountains are limited and closure of this portion of the WSA would reduce potential recreation activities. However, the boundary road to New York Butte and the Swansea community would remain open. Approximately, 200 visitor days are expected to continue without the use of motorized vehicles.

Within the 9,180 acres of the nondesignated portion of the WSA, motorized recreation use would remain open with use prescribed in the Benton-Owens Valley MFP as limited to designated or existing routes and trails. Ten miles of vehicle routes would remain open for use which would help offset the closure of routes in the designated portion by providing continued access to the central portion of the WSA. Motorized recreation use would increase from the present level of 400 visitor days to a projected 600 visitor days as a result of closure of the designated portion.

Conclusion:

Overall there would be a minor impact to motorized recreation. The effects of closure of 27,420 acres of the WSA including 5 miles of primitive vehicle routes eliminating 600 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use would be partially offset by an increase of 200 visitor days within the 9,180-acre nonwilderness portion of the WSA. There would be a net loss of 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use per year under the Proposed Action.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Under the Proposed Action 27,420 acres within the WSA would be closed to mineral entry as a result of wilderness designation. This portion of the WSA generally has no potential to a low potential for mineral resources with no exploration or development anticipated. While there are areas of moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals, development potential is low with no mining activity projected. Therefore, there would be no impact on mineral development.

The 9,180 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, would remain open to mineral entry. This includes the southwest portion of the WSA which has a high potential for metallic minerals. There is a low to moderate probability that silver would be discovered and an underground mine developed. Since the nonwilderness portion of the WSA would remain open, there would be no impact on mineral development.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on mineral resources. While exploration and development would be foregone within the 27,420 acres designated wilderness, this area generally has no potential to a low potential for development of mineral resources. Potential development of a silver mine could occur within an area of high mineral potential within the 9,180 acres not designated wilderness.

Impacts on the Inyo Mountain Salamander

Under the Proposed Action there are no management actions projected that would affect the Inyo Mountain salamander, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species. Habitat for both known populations would be within the wilderness portion of the WSA. Wilderness designation would provide a slight positive benefit by precluding any potential or unforeseen activities such as mining activity and motorized recreation use that could adversely affect either the populations or the habitat of the Inyo Mountain salamander.

Conclusion:

There would be a slight positive benefit for the Inyo Mountain salamander. Habitat for both known populations would be within the portion of the WSA designated wilderness.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

Mining activities would lead to unavoidable adverse impacts to wilderness values in the nondesignated portion of the WSA as a result of 115 acres of surface disturbance. Motorized recreation use within the nondesignated portion would not lead to any significant adverse impacts due to the low level of use which is confined primarily to 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes.

Within the designated portion of the WSA, construction of wildlife guzzlers would only locally result in negligible adverse impacts.

No other activities are anticipated that would result in any unavoidable adverse impacts in the WSA.

Relationship of Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

Under the Proposed Action, wilderness designation of 27,420 acres would preclude existing motorized recreation use. However, all other current short-term uses would continue and long-term productivity would be maintained. Future development options would be restricted due to wilderness designation.

On the 9,180 acres not designated, all short-term uses would continue and future development options would remain open. Long-term productivity would not likely be impacted except for a direct loss of productivity on 115 acres as a result of mining activity.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Mineral development in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would result in an irreversible commitment of the wilderness resource on 115 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the mineral resource. Throughout the remainder of the WSA, no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are projected.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

36,600 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the All Wilderness Alternative the entire 36,600 acres of the Southern Inyo WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts relate to the prohibition of mining activities and motorized recreation use and the associated benefits to wilderness values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

All 36,600 acres within the Southern Inyo WSA would be designated wilderness under the All Wilderness Alternative. All wilderness values would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. Wilderness values would be retained including naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features such as stands of bristlecone pine trees, the Inyo Mountain salamander, a candidate species, as well as the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram and the Pat Keyes Trail, a historic mining trail. Should valid existing rights be established mineral development would impact wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness in the WSA as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. The current 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be eliminated and the 15 miles of existing vehicle routes primarily along the western periphery of the WSA would be allowed to rehabilitate naturally. However, in this arid, desert scrub landscape revegetation would be a very slow process, leaving the routes as reminders of past vehicular use.

Construction of two wildlife guzzlers would locally impair naturalness on up to 4 acres each. As described under the Proposed Action, the impacts would be highly localized and negligible.

There is a low to moderate probability that a projected mineral discovery would occur and valid existing rights would be established. Should this occur, the development of the anticipated underground silver mine in the southern portion of the WSA near Swansea Road would result in a loss of 115 acres of naturalness. As described under the Proposed Action the perception of naturalness would be impaired within a 500-acre area. Since this mining activity would essentially be isolated from the entire 36,600-acre WSA except for the 500-acre viewshed, impacts on the overall naturalness of the WSA would be negligible. Should a mineral discovery not occur, valid existing rights could not be established and mineral development would be precluded. Therefore, naturalness would be maintained.

Interpretive facilities along the Saline Valley Salt Tram and the Pat Keyes Trail would prohibited. Therefore, naturalness would not be affected.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude within the WSA as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. The current 1,000 visitor days of vehicle use would be eliminated. However, due to the low level of use which is primarily occurring on 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes, this would not significantly enhance the outstanding opportunities for solitude within the WSA.

Vehicle use for the construction and maintenance of two wildlife guzzlers and the use of a helicopter to transport bighorn sheep to a release site for reintroduction of this native species in the WSA would result in negligible short-term impacts as described under the Proposed Action.

Development of a projected silver mine in the southern portion of the WSA would result in localized adverse impacts to solitude. As described under the Proposed Action, solitude would be lost within a 500-acre area isolated from the remainder of the 36,600-acre WSA. Overall this would result in a minor impact to solitude within the WSA.

Vehicle access to a patented mining claim inside the WSA south of Long John Canyon would occur approximately four times per year. As described under the Proposed Action, only very negligible impacts to solitude would occur infrequently along the existing vehicle route used for access.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the entire WSA to motorized recreation use would slightly improve opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within the WSA. Should mining activities occur, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited in 115 acres in the extreme southern portion of the WSA. Should valid existing rights not be established, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained.

Special Features

The special features of the WSA which include stands of bristlecone pine trees, the Inyo Mountain salamander, a candidate species, as well as the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram and the Pat Keyes Trail, a historic mining trail, would be retained and slightly benefited under the All Wilderness Alternative.

Conclusion:

All wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced under the All Wilderness Alternative due to the elimination of 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use on 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Should mineral development occur there would be a direct loss of naturalness on 115 acres. Additionally, the perception of naturalness and solitude would be lost within a 500-acre viewshed.

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation as well as special features would be retained and slightly enhanced within the WSA.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

All 36,600 acres within the WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use including 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes. As a result of wilderness designation 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. Approximately 200 of these visitor days would continue without the use of motorized vehicles. Closure of the WSA would limit

opportunities of vehicular access to the Inyo Mountains. Boundary roads along the western edge of the WSA would continue to provide access to the lower slopes of the WSA. However, vehicular access to the upper portion would be limited to a rugged jeep trail along the crest of the Inyo Mountains that leads to New York Butte. Overall, closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use would result in a moderate impact.

Conclusion:

As a result of designating the entire WSA as wilderness, 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. Since access opportunities to the Inyo Mountains are limited, this would result in a moderate impact.

Impacts on Mineral Development

The entire 36,600 acres of the WSA would be closed to all new mining claims and mineral entry. The 170 mining claims within the WSA would be subjected to validity determinations. Since the majority of these claims are in areas of low mineral potential or less, it is anticipated that they would become invalidated and all activity would cease. There is only a low to moderate probability that claims in the southwest portion of the WSA in an area of high metallic mineral potential would prove valid existing rights. Since a discovery has not been made and is only projected to occur sometime within a 15- to 20-year planning estimate, it is unlikely valid existing rights would apply. However, should a discovery occur prior to wilderness designation it is likely development would occur. While the WSA is considered to have areas of moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals including uranium, dolomite, limestone, and beryl, development potential is considered to be low, with no mining activity anticipated for these potential resources.

Conclusion:

Overall there would only be a minor impact on development of mineral resources as a result of wilderness designation. Should a discovery of silver occur within the area of high metallic mineral potential in the southwest portion of the WSA, determination of valid existing rights would allow development under wilderness designation. Development of the potential silver deposit would be foregone if a discovery does not occur prior to designation. Other potential mineral resources would also be foregone as exploration and development activities would be prohibited.

Impacts on the Inyo Mountain Salamander

As described under the Proposed Action there are no management actions projected which would affect the Inyo Mountain salamander. Under the All Wilderness Alternative the same slight positive benefit would occur with the addition of the entire 36,600 acres within the WSA being designated as wilderness.

Conclusion:

There would be a slight positive benefit for the Inyo Mountain salamander as a result of the entire WSA being designated wilderness.

NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
36,600 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the No Wilderness/No Action Alternative none of the WSA would be recommended as suitable. The WSA would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts relate to wilderness values as a result of projected mineral development and continued motorized recreation use within the WSA.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the No Wilderness/No Action Alternative none of the 36,600 acres would be designated wilderness. No wilderness values within the WSA would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including stands of bristlecone pine trees, the Inyo Mountain salamander, a candidate species, as well as remnants of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram and the Pat Keyes Trail, a historic mining trail. These values would be subjected to the effects of multiple use management with the primary activities within the WSA being continued motorized recreation use and mineral development.

Naturalness

Approximately 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation would continue on 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the WSA with no increase in use projected. The MFP prescribes vehicle use in the areas as limited to designated or existing routes and trails. The continued use of these primitive vehicle routes would have a minor impact on naturalness as a result of maintaining their presence in the WSA. The perception of naturalness would be impaired in the vicinity of these existing routes. Since use is restricted to existing routes, and the steep nature of the terrain limits opportunities for vehicle travel off these routes, no new impacts are anticipated from the creation of additional routes due to casual use.

Construction of two wildlife guzzlers would locally impair naturalness on up to 4 acres each. As described under the Proposed Action, the impacts would be highly localized and negligible.

Development of an underground silver mine with surface facilities including portals, air shafts, mine shafts, a millsite and disposal areas for waste rock and tailings would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 100 acres in the southern portion of the WSA as described under the Proposed Action.

Consequences

Mining activity would impair the perception of naturalness within a 500-acre viewshed along the southern boundary of the WSA. Since the mining would essentially be isolated from the remainder of the WSA, the overall impacts on naturalness would be negligible.

Interpretive facilities along all portions of the Saline Valley Salt Tram (3¼ miles) and the Pat Keyes Trail (6 miles) within the WSA would consist of post markers correlated with an interpretive brochure. Due to the inconspicuous nature of the posts, there would only be very localized impacts on naturalness that would be very slight.

Solitude

Occasional vehicle use on 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would maintain the existing level of solitude which has been slightly diminished by existing motorized recreation use for visitors in the vicinity of these routes. However the relatively low level of use and dispersed nature of use would result in only minor impacts. There are no increases projected that would result in additional impacts to solitude.

Vehicle use for the construction and maintenance of two wildlife guzzlers and the use of a helicopter to transport bighorn sheep to a release site for reintroduction of this native species into the WSA would result in negligible short-term impacts as described under the Proposed Action.

Development of a projected silver mine in the southern portion of the WSA would result in localized adverse impacts to solitude. As described under the Proposed Action, solitude would be lost within a 500-acre area isolated from the remainder of the 36,600-acre WSA. Overall this would result in a minor impact to solitude within the WSA.

Vehicle access to a patented mining claim inside the WSA south of Long John Canyon would occur approximately four times per year. As described under the Proposed Action, only negligible impacts to solitude would occur infrequently along the existing vehicle route used for access.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited on 115 acres as a result of mining activities in the extreme southern portion of the WSA. Continued motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) would occur primarily on 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and only negligibly impact opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to the extensive opportunities throughout the WSA the impacts would be insignificant overall.

Special Features

The special features of the WSA would not be significantly impacted, if impacted at all, by the continued low level of motorized recreation use or the projected mining activity in the southern portion of the WSA. The remnants of the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram and the Pat Keyes Trail would be vulnerable to theft or vandalism as a result of continued vehicle

use within the WSA. However, vehicle access is very limited to these features and the threat of potential impacts is considered minor. Prior to mineral development in the southern portion of the WSA a survey would be required to identify the location of the tram in relation to projected mining activity in order to either assure mining activity avoids this National Register feature or that potential impacts are mitigated. However, while the Saline Valley Salt Tram is adjacent to the anticipated mining development, it is not within the projected area of surface disturbance. Therefore, potential impacts are not anticipated.

Conclusion:

The wilderness values within the WSA would be subjected to a minor overall impact by not designating the area wilderness. However, the primary impacts would be highly localized. Mineral development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 100 acres and the perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired over an area of 500 acres. Continued motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) would locally result in negligible impacts to naturalness and solitude. Primitive and unconfined recreation would be diminished within the 115 acres projected for mining and within the vicinity of the 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes used for motorized recreation. Special features would not be significantly impacted however the primary threat would result from mining activity in the vicinity of the Saline Valley Salt Tram.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the No Wilderness/No Action Alternative all motorized recreation use in the WSA would continue. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes vehicle use within the WSA as limited to designated or existing routes and trails. There are 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes available to support the current 1,000 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use. No increase in motorized recreation use is anticipated. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use. The entire WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use with the current 1,000 visitor days of use projected to remain stable.

Impacts on Mineral Resource Development

Under the No Wilderness/No Action Alternative the entire WSA would remain open to mineral entry. While there are approximately 170 mining claims within the WSA there is generally a low potential for mineral resources or less. Areas of moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals including uranium, dolomite, limestone and beryl are considered to have only a low development potential. The only mining activity projected for the WSA would occur in an area of high metallic mineral potential in the southwest portion. There is a low to moderate probability that a silver discovery would be made that would lead to the development of an underground mine along Swansea Road near the southwest boundary of the WSA. There would be no impact on mineral development.

Consequences

Conclusion:

The entire WSA would be open to mineral entry, therefore, there would be no impact on mineral development. Development of a potential underground mine for silver is the only mining activity projected for the WSA.

Impacts on the Inyo Mountain Salamander

There are two known populations of the Inyo Mountain salamander, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species, within the WSA. Although there are no management actions projected to occur within the vicinity of the habitat, under the No Wilderness/No Action Alternative activities such as mineral exploration and development and increased motorized recreation use could potentially occur throughout the WSA. In the unlikely event that the habitat were threatened by development or increased use, a surface inventory would be completed to determine appropriate actions or mitigation measures to assure that there would be no impacts, with the habitat being avoided, or that protection measures be established to minimize any potential impacts. There is no livestock grazing within the WSA and none projected. Motorized recreation use is limited to existing or designated routes and trails with no impacts resulting from current use which does not occur in the vicinity of the habitat. There are no increases in motorized recreation use projected. Therefore, only negligible impacts, if any, would occur in relation to the Inyo Mountain salamander without wilderness designation.

Conclusion:

There would be only negligible impacts to the Inyo Mountain salamander as the result of potential or unforeseen activities within the WSA. There are no management actions projected that would impact either the populations or the habitat.

INDEPENDENCE CREEK
(CA-010-057)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,250 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 6,250 acres of the Independence Creek WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the effects of continued motorized recreation use and a proposed prescribed burn on wilderness values.

Impact on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values on 6,250 acres would receive the special legislative protection

provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation, riparian habitat, tule elk, and mule deer. Impacts to wilderness values would include continued motorized recreational use which is low and expected to remain stable, the short-term visual impacts of a prescribed burn to increase livestock forage, and continued maintenance and use of the existing water-spreading and diversion channels.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on 2 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 20 acres of the WSA. The overall low recreation use and projected low levels of use (500 visitor use days per year) as well as the lack of primitive vehicle routes restricts impairment of naturalness to the north and east portions of the WSA. Alteration of naturalness due to motor vehicle use is expected to remain negligible and stable over the long term (greater than 5 years). In addition, proposed brush thinning on George Creek to improve fishermen access to favorable fishing sites would entail selective removal of natural riparian vegetation along the creek. Creek sites would be open to accommodate 1 to 2 fishermen per site. Site openings would slightly affect naturalness along the creek.

The proposed prescribed burn of 1,800 acres to increase livestock forage over the east half of the WSA located south of George Creek would alter naturalness over a short time period (less than 5 years). During the first 1 to 2 years, the 1,800-acre burned area would appear as a charred and blackened landscape. Within 2 to 4 years, vegetation would reestablish with grasses, forbs, and ultimately desert scrub species, resulting in a more uniform composition of mixed vegetative species. The area would appear quite natural even though the land surrounding the burn would be in a more advanced state of succession.

As a result of the prescribed burn, it is estimated that there would be a 100-AUM increase of forage for cattle. An increase of 25 cattle as a result of the 100-AUM increase would slightly alter naturalness in the east portion of the WSA.

Additional proposed livestock grazing improvements which would affect naturalness include three water developments and a 1-mile pipeline. The water developments would disturb a surface area of 25 square feet each. These developments would be located in the northeast, southeast, and west edges of the WSA. Each would be observable from a radial distance of up to 200 feet. The 1-mile pipeline would be buried and rehabilitated with native vegetation species. The pipeline would be located along the south edge of the WSA. The low magnitude of these proposed facilities as well as their distance from one another only slightly alters naturalness at a local level.

Under a right-of-way authorization, the City of Los Angeles would continue to maintain existing water-spreading and diversion channels to prevent flooding of U.S. Highway 395 and adjoining alfalfa fields, which lie to the east of the unit. The existing water-spreading and diversion channels are located in the east quarter of the WSA and occupy a linear distance of 5 miles. The perceptual impact of these features is low and negligibly

impairs the perception of naturalness over an area of 100 acres. These impacts would result from continued berming of soil along the downslope side of the channels from maintenance activities which occur every 3 years.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on 2 miles of primitive vehicle routes would detract from the feeling of solitude in the north and east portions of the WSA. However, the low level of motor vehicle use, both present and projected (500 annual visits), would make these impacts negligible.

Human activity associated with the prescribed burn such as vehicle and helicopter use would be perceived throughout the WSA, thus impairing solitude in virtually all of the WSA. Smoke and flame during the prescribed burn would be most obvious to users in the area. However, these impacts would be visible intermittently for only a 3-month period.

Construction of proposed range improvement projects would necessitate vehicle use. Vehicles would be used to construct the 1-mile pipeline for a period of 10 days during construction. The three proposed water developments would require 5 days of vehicle use for each project during construction. The cumulative impact to solitude as a result of vehicle use during construction would be negligible and localized due to the projects' remote location and distance from one another.

Existing range improvement maintenance activities requiring the use of vehicles would continue at a rate of 4 days every 5 years for fence maintenance and 1 day per year for salt block placement. Proposed range improvement maintenance activities include vehicle use for the pipeline at a rate of 2 days per year and for the three water developments at a total rate of 3 days per year. Impacts to solitude would be low due to the low incidence of vehicle use expected for maintenance of facilities. Existing vehicle use of the livestock driveway by sheepherders would continue as part of ongoing livestock operations.

Maintenance of existing water-spreading and diversion channels would continue to disrupt solitude along the east quarter of the WSA. Heavy equipment, including backhoes, bulldozers, and road graders as well as support vehicles, is used to maintain these facilities during a period of 2 weeks every 3 years. The use of this heavy equipment degrades solitude during daylight hours in the immediate 100-acre area. Since this use will continue, there would be no change in the existing level of solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Primitive and unconfined types of recreation would be maintained throughout the WSA with only negligible impacts from the continued 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use. The lack of existing uses and projected management actions in this WSA would sustain the area's primitive and unconfined recreation uses such as fishing and hunting.

Special Features

Special features of the WSA such as tule elk, mule deer and George Creek riparian habitat would not be impacted by the area's existing uses and projected management actions. The low magnitude of the existing uses and projected management actions would sustain long-term primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities.

Conclusion:

There would be only very minor and short-term impacts on the wilderness values of naturalness and solitude in portions of the WSA. A proposed prescribed burn would have a short-term impact on naturalness (1,800 acres) and solitude (3-month period) values. Twenty-five additional cattle would use the denuded area after vegetation had become reestablished, thus slightly affecting naturalness. Maintenance of existing and proposed range facilities as well as existing water-spreading and diversion channels would slightly affect solitude in local areas for short periods of time and impair the perception of naturalness on less than 100 acres.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action the entire WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP designates use on existing routes and trails which total 2 miles in the WSA. Motorized recreation use which primarily consists of fishing, hunting, and sightseeing is expected to remain stable at the current 500 visitor days per year.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which is expected to remain at the current 500 visitor days per year.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

All proposed livestock grazing and range improvement projects would be implemented in the WSA. This includes a 1,800-acre prescribed burn to be conducted as three separate prescriptions of 600 acres each. The purpose of the burn would be to increase forage production by 100 AUMs. Other projects include a pipeline and three water developments. Total AUMs for the WSA would increase from the current 553 to a total of 653 AUMs.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact to livestock grazing and range improvements. All existing operations and proposed projects would be permitted, including a 1,800-acre prescribed burn to increase forage production by 100 AUMs to a total of 653 AUMs.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

The only adverse impacts associated with management actions for the Proposed Action would be related to prescribed burning for livestock grazing. Burning and vehicular use to support the operations could lead

to short-term adverse impacts. Continued motorized recreation use would not result in any significant adverse impact since the current use of 500 visitor days per year is anticipated to remain stable and is limited to the 2 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. No other unavoidable adverse impacts are anticipated.

Relationship Between the Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Independence Creek WSA these uses include hunting, fishing, sightseeing, livestock grazing, and wildlife habitat management. A proposed prescribed burn would increase forage productivity on 1,800 acres within the WSA. No development of the two existing mining claims or other mineral development is anticipated. However, by not designating the WSA as wilderness, these activities could potentially occur in the future adversely impacting long-term productivity.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Activities such as mineral development could create an irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness resource. However, no mining activities are projected for the Independence Creek WSA. No irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated under the Proposed Action.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,250 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative the entire 6,250 acres of the Independence Creek WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

Impact on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 6,250 acres of Independence Creek WSA would be designated wilderness, and all values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features would be retained.

Naturalness

There would be a minor positive effect to naturalness due primarily to the closure of the area to motorized recreation use, even though current vehicular use of the area is low; i.e., 500 visitor use days. Two miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to vehicles, and used as hiking and equestrian trails.

Also benefiting naturalness would be the exclusion of any mining exploration and development in the WSA.

The proposed prescribed burn on 1,800 acres in the WSA would be prohibited, precluding a 100-AUM forage increase for 25 additional cattle. This would result in a low positive impact to naturalness.

As in the Proposed Action, proposed range improvement projects consisting of three water developments and a 1-mile pipeline would be constructed disturbing a surface area of 25 square feet for each water development. The water development projects would be observable from a radial distance up to 200 feet. The pipeline would be buried and rehabilitated with native vegetation. The low magnitude of these proposed facilities as well as their distance from one another would slightly alter naturalness at a local level.

Under a right-of-way authorization, the City of Los Angeles would continue to maintain existing water-spreading and diversion channels to prevent flooding of U.S. Highway 395 and adjoining alfalfa fields, which lie to the east of the WSA. The existing water-spreading and diversion channels are located in the east quarter of the WSA and occupy a linear distance of 5 miles. The perceptual impact of these features is low and negligibly impairs the perception of naturalness over an area of 100 acres. These impacts would result from continued berming of soil along the downslope side of the channels from maintenance activities which occur every 3 years.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (500 annual visits), solitude is enhanced slightly.

Solitude is enhanced as a result of the prohibition of the prescribed burn. The lack of human and vehicular activity associated with this action precludes short-term adverse impacts to solitude throughout the WSA.

Vehicle use associated with construction and maintenance of proposed range improvements and the maintenance of existing water-spreading and diversion channels would have the same effects on solitude as those described under the Proposed Action.

Solitude would be slightly benefited during maintenance of existing range improvements. Under this alternative, existing fence maintenance would be conducted by personnel who ride to the project site on horseback. This would eliminate 3 days of motor vehicle use every 5 years in the designated area. Livestock operators would be allowed to use a vehicle to transport fence materials to the project site at a rate of 1 day every 5 years. Additionally, placement of salt blocks would be done on horseback, eliminating 1 day each year of vehicle use in the designated area. Finally, sheepherders would use motor vehicles on roads outside the designated area during livestock driveway use, eliminating 5 days of vehicle use per year when the driveway is used. Maintenance of existing water-spreading and diversion channels would have the same effects on solitude as those identified under the Proposed Action.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Impacts to primitive and unconfined types of recreation would be the same as those identified under the Proposed Action.

Consequences

Special Features

Impacts to special features would be the same as those identified under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

The net effect of the management actions would be a slight enhancement of long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of area to motor vehicle use, prohibitions of the proposed prescribed burn, and a decrease in vehicle use associated with maintenance of existing range improvements and existing livestock driveway use would provide some, albeit low, benefits to the area's wilderness values. In addition, long-term security from unanticipated adverse future actions such as mineral exploration and development would be provided.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 6,250 acres within the Independence Creek WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use including 2 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Closure of the WSA would eliminate 500 visitor days that would be displaced to other public lands outside the WSA that could absorb this use. Additionally the WSA is bounded by vehicle routes on the north and south with another vehicle route along portions of the east boundary. While recreational vehicle travel within the WSA would be prohibited, vehicular access would be available along approximately 80% of the WSA's boundary. However, since current recreation use is focused on vehicle travel it is anticipated that only approximately 20 recreation users would continue to use the WSA without motorized vehicles.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use totaling 500 visitor days would be foregone. This would result in only a minor impact as opportunities for motorized recreation use are available on other public lands outside the WSA, and the boundary roads would provide access to those recreation users that wish to continue using the area without vehicles.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

The proposed 1,800-acre prescribed burn would be prohibited under the All Wilderness Alternative. An opportunity to increase livestock forage by 100 AUMs would be foregone. This amounts to approximately a 20% increase over the existing 553 AUMs. While the opportunity to increase forage on these public lands would be foregone, the loss of the potential increase is not seen as a significant adverse impact to current livestock operations. Current operations are not dependent upon the proposed increase. All other proposed livestock grazing and range improvement projects could be implemented. Existing operations would only be minimally affected by restrictions on vehicle use that would continue to allow the use of vehicles where it was the most efficient means and minimum tool necessary to accomplish the task. Overall only a minor impact on livestock grazing and range improvements would be incurred.

Conclusion:

Prohibiting a proposed 1,800-acre prescribed burn would result in foregoing an opportunity to increase livestock forage by 100 AUMs. Current livestock operations are not dependent upon this increase therefore there would only be a minor impact.

CRATER MOUNTAIN WSA
(CA-010-062)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
7,260 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action none of the 7,260 acres within the Crater Mountain WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts of this proposal relate to how wilderness values and cultural resources would be affected by mining activities and continued motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values on the 7,260 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including the scenic and geologic values of the Crater Mountain cinder cone and lava flows, as well as cultural resource values, habitat for tule elk and crucial winter habitat for mule deer. Impacts to these values would include continued motorized recreation use and potential mineral development.

Naturalness

The continued use of motorized vehicles which is limited to 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would only impair the perception of naturalness within the southwest portion of the WSA. Approximately 5 acres within the mixed desert shrub area of the WSA would be impaired by the continued presence of vehicle routes. The majority of the WSA is blanketed with the cinder cone and rugged lava flows which preclude motorized vehicle use. Except for the southwest portion of the WSA, naturalness would not be affected by continued motorized recreation use.

The projected development of an underground gold mine in the southeast portion of the WSA would result in the loss of naturalness on 90 acres due to surface disturbance as well as 3 miles of road construction for exploration and development. This mining activity would be located at the base of Fish Springs Hill on the northeast side. Surface disturbance would denude the sparse desert shrub cover that currently exists due to the

construction of surface facilities and the location of waste rock and tailing disposal sites. Mining development would impair the perception of naturalness on approximately 1,200 acres as viewed from the cinder cone and portions of the lava flows south and southeast of the cinder cone.

Continued use of a 3-mile-long livestock driveway along the east boundary would maintain this linear travelway with a surface denuded of the surrounding desert shrubs. No new livestock facilities are proposed. Maintenance of an existing half-mile of drift fence and three half-mile pipelines would not result in any significant impairment of naturalness.

Installation of a chukar water facility would result in approximately 100 square feet of surface disturbance on which naturalness would be lost. Since the water holding reservoir would be buried the overall facility would have a low profile and would not result in any noticeable impairment of naturalness.

Solitude

Occasional vehicle use on 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would only locally disturb solitude within the southwest portion of the WSA. Due to the low level of current use (675 visitor days) which is projected to remain stable, impacts to solitude would only result in periodic disruptions.

Potential mining activities associated with development of an underground gold mine would significantly reduce the sense of solitude on 1,200 acres within the southeast portion of the WSA. Noise and human activity would be associated with short-term construction activities as well as long-term operations of the mine.

Continued maintenance of existing livestock facilities and placement of salt blocks would result in only seven vehicle trips per year plus two additional trips every 5 years. Use of the livestock driveway would continue for 5 days each year. Vehicle use would infrequently create only negligible impacts on solitude.

Installation of the chukar water facility would require 2 days of vehicle use and one vehicle trip per year for maintenance resulting in only negligible impacts to solitude on a localized basis and would not diminish solitude throughout the entire WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Mining development would diminish primitive and unconfined recreation on approximately 90 acres. Continued motorized recreation use (675 visitor days) would limit opportunities within the southwestern portion of the WSA for primitive and unconfined recreation. However, the impacts from these activities would be insignificant in relation to the entire WSA which would continue to provide many opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Hunting, hiking, horseback riding and sightseeing would be available throughout the WSA.

Special Features

The geologic and scenic values of the cinder cone and lava flows would generally be unaffected by projected uses within the WSA. Mule deer winter habitat is located in the western portion of the WSA away from any potential mineral development. Tule elk utilizing the WSA generally would not be impacted by any of the projected management actions except possible short-term displacement or disruption due to mining operations and continued motorized recreation use. Continued motorized recreation use and projected mining activity pose potential threats to cultural resource values, particularly petroglyphs, however monitoring and mitigation measures would either avoid or minimize the possibility of impacts.

Conclusion:

The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA associated with development of an underground gold mine. These impacts would result in the loss of naturalness on 90 acres, and the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be impaired on approximately 1,200 acres.

Impacts from continued motorized recreation use, livestock operations and maintenance of existing livestock facilities, as well as construction and maintenance of a proposed chukar water facility would generally be localized and insignificant due to the infrequent nature of these activities and low level of use.

Impacts to wilderness values would predominantly only occur in the southern portion of the WSA and not affect the majority of the 7,260 acres within the WSA.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

All motorized recreation use in the WSA would continue under the Proposed Action. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes use within the WSA as limited to existing routes and trails. Currently there are 675 visitor days of motorized recreation use on 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the WSA. The WSA would remain open for vehicular use and provide access for hunting and sightseeing especially in relation to geological values and cultural resources. The area's current low use and low demand is expected to remain constant with no increases in use projected.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use. The entire WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use with the current 675 visitor days expected to remain stable.

Impacts on Mineral Development

The entire 7,260 acres within the WSA would remain open for mineral entry. The WSA generally has either a low potential for mineral occurrence or a low development potential. The southern portion of the WSA near Fish Springs Hill is considered to have a moderate potential for metallic minerals with a moderate development potential. It is anticipated that a gold discovery in this area would lead to development of an underground mine. Although there are 59 mining claims, predominantly in the southern portion of the WSA, no other development is anticipated. Under the Proposed Action there would be no impact on mineral development.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on mineral development. The entire WSA would remain open to mineral entry. However, the only potential development anticipated would be an underground gold mine in the southern portion of the WSA.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Under the Proposed Action, cultural resources particularly petroglyph sites in the southern portion of the WSA would be subject to potential impacts as a result of continued motorized recreation use and projected mineral development. These sites will be monitored to determine if protection efforts are necessary as a result of continued vehicular use in the WSA. However, no increases in vehicle use are projected and use is limited to existing roads and trails. Prior to approval of any Plan of Operations for mining activity a surface inventory would be required to determine the need or extent of mitigation measures necessary to avoid potential sites or minimize impacts as a result of surface disturbance. An intensive inventory including potential archaeological excavations has been proposed for the WSA and would provide additional guidance for the management of cultural resources.

Conclusion:

There is a potential for adverse impacts to cultural resources within the WSA however these impacts would be avoided or minimized through monitoring, protection efforts and mitigation measures for projected mining activities.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

The only adverse impacts which cannot be avoided would be associated with development of an underground gold mine in the southeast portion of the WSA. Impacts as a result of surface disturbance of 90 acres would be localized. As a result of preplanning, mitigation measures and mine operations would likely reduce the potential for significant adverse impacts. Livestock operations and facility maintenance, and construction of a chukar water facility would not result in any significant adverse impacts. Continued motorized recreation use confined to 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes with use levels remaining stable would not likely result in adverse impacts.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present, short-term use would continue. For the Crater Mountain WSA there are many ongoing uses including hunting, hiking, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat management and mineral exploration. Under the Proposed Action, potential mineral development would result in a loss of long-term productivity on 90 acres. Throughout the remainder of the WSA almost all future options will remain open and long-term productivity is not likely to be impacted.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

The only irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness resource would result from potential mining activities which would also result in an irretrievable loss of mineral resources. The only other potential irretrievable loss of resource value would relate to potential impacts to cultural resources. However, protection and mitigation measures would minimize if not avoid potential impacts to cultural resource values within the WSA.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

7,260 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative all of the 7,260 acres within the Crater Mountain WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts of this alternative relate to the prohibition of motorized recreation use and mineral development particularly if valid existing rights cannot be proven upon designation of the WSA as wilderness. The wilderness values of the WSA benefit under this alternative as a result of prohibition of motorized recreation use as well as potential mining activities.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative all 7,260 acres of the Crater Mountain WSA would be designated wilderness. All wilderness values within the WSA would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including the scenic and geologic values of the Crater Mountain cinder cone and lava flows, as well as cultural values, habitat for tule elk and crucial habitat for mule deer would be retained except where mineral development were to potentially occur should valid existing rights be proven.

Naturalness

There would be a low positive benefit to naturalness particularly in the southwest portion of the WSA as a result of closing the entire WSA including 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes to motorized recreation use. The

existing travel routes would slowly be invaded by the surrounding mixed desert shrubs. Current use (675 visitor days) occurs only on designated trails in the southwest portion of the WSA. As a result the benefits of wilderness designation would be localized to this portion of the WSA.

While wilderness designation would preclude mineral development throughout the majority of the WSA, there is a low to moderate probability that a determination of valid existing rights would result in development of an underground mine in the southeast portion of the WSA near Fish Springs Hill. As described under the Proposed Action, mining activity would result in the loss of naturalness on 90 acres and impair the perception of naturalness on approximately 1,200 acres.

Use of a 3-mile-long livestock driveway along the east boundary would continue as described under the Proposed Action as would maintenance of existing livestock facilities. The impacts to naturalness would be the same as under the Proposed Action with no significant impairment of naturalness.

Installation of a chukar water facility would not result in any noticeable impairment of naturalness.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude within the southwest portion of the WSA as a result of eliminating 675 visitor days and closing 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. The periodic disruptions of solitude as a result of vehicle use would cease.

Potential mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA would significantly reduce the sense of solitude on 1,200 acres as described under the Proposed Action should valid existing rights be proven. If a mineral discovery is not made prior to wilderness designation and valid existing rights cannot be determined, a significant benefit would be realized by retaining solitude in this portion of the WSA since mineral development would be prohibited.

Installation and maintenance of a chukar water facility in the southeast portion of the WSA near Fish Springs Hill would be the same as described under the Proposed Action with the same negligible localized impacts.

Motorized vehicle use associated with the livestock driveway would be accommodated outside the WSA slightly improving solitude. However, since this use would still occur adjacent to the boundary it would result in a minimal effect. Vehicle use for the maintenance of existing livestock facilities would be limited to transportation of materials. Inspection and minor maintenance would be done on horseback as would salt block placement.

Vehicle restrictions would result in a reduction of approximately three vehicle trips per year. Continued use would remain insignificant in its effect on solitude due to its infrequency and localized nature primarily along the south and west boundaries.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would increase slightly in the southwest portion of the WSA as a result of eliminating 675 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Prohibition of mining within the WSA would improve opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in the southeast portion of the WSA as a result of precluding a potential underground gold mine with 90 acres of surface disturbance. However, should valid existing rights be determined, the potential mine and surface disturbance would diminish opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Special Features

Elimination of motorized recreation use and mining would reduce potential threats to cultural resource values, particularly petroglyph sites as well as reducing short-term disruptions of displacement of tule elk from habitat within the WSA and crucial mule deer winter habitat. Should mining claims in the southeast portion of the WSA prove valid existing rights, mining activities would result in potential threats to cultural resource values and tule elk habitat. However, monitoring and mitigation measures would either avoid or minimize the possibility of impacts.

Other special features including crucial winter habitat for mule deer and the scenic and geologic values of the Crater Mountain cinder cone and lava flows would generally be unaffected other than benefiting from the protection of wilderness designation from any unforeseen activities or surface disturbance.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would result in low positive benefits to all wilderness values throughout the WSA, particularly in the southwest portion of the WSA due to the elimination of 675 visitor days of motorized recreation use.

Should valid existing rights not be proven, mining activities would be precluded. Wilderness values would be retained on 90 acres and within 1,200 acres in which the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude would not be impaired due to mining. However, should mining claims in the southeast portion of the WSA prove valid existing rights, mining activity would result in a loss of naturalness on 90 acres and impair the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude on 1,200 acres.

Impacts resulting from livestock operations and construction and maintenance of a chukar water facility would generally be localized and insignificant with negligible benefits as a result of restricting three vehicle trips per year.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use as a result of wilderness designation. By prohibiting motorized recreation use, 675 visitor days would be foregone and 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed. The existing vehicle routes are concentrated in the southwest portion of the WSA and do not provide access opportunities throughout the WSA. The WSA is surrounded by roads along the western and southern boundaries and is within one-half to one mile from major access roads on the north and east (U.S. Highway 395). Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use would primarily affect a small area in the southwest portion of the WSA and not significantly limit access to the WSA on the whole. Hunting access would be restricted, although walk-in opportunities exist from the boundary roads. There are similar opportunities on public land outside the WSA that would accommodate the displaced use. It is estimated that 100 visitor days would continue without the use of motorized vehicles within the WSA. Due to the relative small size of the WSA, approximately 5 miles by 3 miles, vehicular access from boundary roads, and the lack of vehicle routes throughout the WSA, there would be only minor impacts to motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

There would be only minor impacts on motorized recreation use. Closure of the WSA would result in 675 visitor days of motorized recreation use foregone.

Impacts on Mineral Development

The entire 7,260 acres within the Crater Mountain WSA would be closed to mineral entry. Due to the generally low potential for minerals throughout the majority of the WSA it is anticipated that most, if not all, mining claims would become invalidated and all activities terminated. However, mining claims in the southern portion of the WSA would have a low to moderate probability of valid existing rights based on the moderate potential for metallic minerals with a moderate development potential. Should a discovery occur prior to wilderness designation, it is likely that development of an underground gold mine would occur as a valid existing right. However, if there is no discovery resulting in a determination of existing rights, exploration and development opportunities would be foregone. There would be only a minor impact to mineral development as a result of foregoing exploration and development of potential mineral resources if claims are terminated as a result of not proving valid existing rights based on a lack of mineral discovery.

Conclusion:

There would be only a minor impact on mineral development as a result of wilderness designation. Opportunities to explore and develop the WSA's generally low potential for mineral resources would be foregone. Should discovery occur within an area of moderate mineral potential in the southern portion of the WSA, a determination of valid existing rights would most likely result in development.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Wilderness designation would result in positive benefits to cultural resources by reducing or eliminating the threat of impacts associated with potential mineral development and continued motorized recreation use. Should mining activity occur as a result of valid existing rights, a surface inventory would be required prior to the approval of any Plan of Operation to determine the extent of mitigation measures necessary to avoid potential sites or minimize impacts as a result of surface disturbance. An intensive inventory has been proposed for the WSA that would provide additional guidance after the management of cultural resources. Wilderness designation could restrict the methods of potential archaeological excavations, however this would not significantly affect the investigations.

Conclusions:

There would be a positive benefit to cultural resources as a result of wilderness designation. The threat of impact-causing activities such as mining and continued motorized recreation use would be eliminated or reduced.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,165 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
1,095 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative 6,165 acres would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 1,095 acres would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to how wilderness values and cultural resources would be affected by mining activity in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, and the impacts associated with prohibiting motorized recreation use throughout the 6,165 acres designated wilderness.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Wilderness values on 6,165 acres within the WSA would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation as described under the Proposed Action. The wilderness values on the 1,095 acres not designated wilderness would not receive any special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. Impacts to these wilderness values in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA would relate to mineral development.

Naturalness

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative the impacts to naturalness would generally be the same as the All Wilderness Alternative with the exception of mineral development. Within the 1,095 acres not designated wilderness, development of a moderate potential for metallic minerals would result in

an underground mine near Fish Springs Hill. Mining activities would include 90 acres of surface disturbance from mining facilities and operations as described under the Proposed Action. Naturalness would be lost on 90 acres and the perception of naturalness impaired over approximately 1,200 acres.

While all 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would be closed as a result of designating 6,165 acres as wilderness, approximately 75 visitor days are expected to continue to use the nondesignated portion in the southeast corner near Fish Springs Hill for access. Since this area is predominately sparse desert shrub vegetation at the base of rugged lava flows, vehicle travel would be restrictive and would only result in minor localized impairment to naturalness over approximately 50 acres.

All other activities and impacts to naturalness would be the same as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. Overall there would only be localized impacts in the Fish Springs Hill Area resulting in a loss of naturalness on 90 acres and impairment of the perception of naturalness on 1,200 acres.

Solitude

The impacts on solitude under the Partial Wilderness Alternative would be the same as those for the All Wilderness Alternative with the exception of impacts related to mining and motorized recreation use which would occur within portions of the 1,095 acres not designated wilderness.

Occasional motorized recreation use would disturb solitude in the nondesignated portion near Fish Springs Hill. However, this use would be limited to an area of approximately 50 acres and would result in 75 visitor days primarily as access. There would be only minor localized impacts from this use. The 6,165 acres designated wilderness would receive a slight positive benefit primarily in the southwest portion where 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be eliminated.

Potential mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA within the 1,095 acres not designated wilderness would significantly reduce the sense of solitude on 1,200 acres as described under the Proposed Action. An underground gold mining operation is anticipated that would result in 90 acres of surface disturbance.

All other activities and impacts to solitude would be the same as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. Overall there would be a low positive benefit to the sense of solitude throughout the WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would increase slightly in the southwest portion of the WSA as a result of eliminating 600 visitor days. Projected mining activities and motorized recreation use in the nonwilderness southeast portion of the WSA near Fish Springs Hill would diminish opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Overall primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities for hunting, hiking, photography, horseback riding, and sightseeing would be retained.

Special Features

Special features would benefit under this alternative in much the same way as under the All Wilderness Alternative. Elimination of motorized recreation use throughout the majority of the WSA would reduce potential threats to cultural resources, particularly petroglyph sites, as well as disruption or displacement of tule elk from habitat. Crucial winter habitat for mule deer would negligibly benefit from eliminating motorized recreation use in the western portion of the WSA in the area designated wilderness. Projected mining activity in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would pose potential threats to cultural resource values particularly petroglyph sites, however, monitoring and mitigation measures would either avoid or minimize the possibility of impacts.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would result in a low positive benefit to all wilderness values within the 6,165 acres designated wilderness, particularly in the southwest portion of the WSA due to the elimination of 600 visitor days of motorized recreation.

Mining activity in the southeast portion of the WSA not designated wilderness would result in a loss of naturalness on 90 acres and the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude impaired on 1,200 acres.

Impacts resulting from livestock operations and construction and maintenance would generally be localized and insignificant as described under the All Wilderness Alternative.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, all 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be within the 6,165 acres designated wilderness and would be closed. There are no existing routes in the 1,095 acres not designated wilderness. However, it is anticipated that approximately 75 visitor days of motorized recreation use would occur in this portion of the WSA primarily as access for hunting and sightseeing. Approximately 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. The impacts would generally be the same as those described under the All Wilderness Alternative which would be minor except that a low level of use (75 visitor days) within the nondesignated portion would occur.

Conclusion:

There would be only minor impacts on motorized recreation use. Approximately 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Wilderness designation of 6,165 acres would result in closing this portion of the WSA to mineral entry. There are approximately 33 mining claims in the wilderness portion of the WSA that would be evaluated for valid

existing rights. Due to the low mineral potential in this area, it is not anticipated that a mineral discovery would occur prior to wilderness designation and the claims would become invalid. Opportunities to explore and develop an area of low mineral potential would be foregone resulting in only a minor impact on mineral development.

The remaining 1,095 acres would be open to mineral entry. There are approximately 26 mining claims in the nondesignated portion, however, mineral potential is predominantly low. Development of an underground mine for gold could potentially occur near Fish Springs Hill in an area of moderate potential for metallic minerals with a moderate development potential. There would be no impacts on mineral development within the portion of the WSA not designated wilderness.

Conclusion:

There would be only minor impacts on mineral development. Exploration and development of mineral resources could occur within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA particularly in an area of moderate potential. In the designated portion, no anticipated development of minerals would be foregone due to the low mineral potential.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

As a result of wilderness designation of 6,165 acres within the WSA under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, cultural resources in this portion of the WSA would receive the same positive benefits as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. The only portions of the WSA not designated wilderness would be the extreme northern tip and the southeast portion of the WSA totaling 1,095 acres. Cultural resources are not predicted within these portions of the WSA and therefore continued motorized recreation use and potential mining activity would be less likely to result in any adverse impacts. Also, there is no motorized recreation use in the northern portion of the WSA since there are no existing routes or trails. A proposed intensive inventory would provide additional guidance for the management of cultural resources within the WSA. Wilderness designation could restrict the methods of potential archaeological excavations, however, this would not significantly affect the investigations.

Conclusion:

There would be a positive benefit to cultural resources as a result of wilderness designation of 6,165 acres within the WSA. There would not likely be any impacts to cultural resources on the 1,095 acres not designated due to the lack of predicted values.

SYMMES CREEK WSA
(CA-010-064)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
8,130 Acres Nonwilderness

None of the 8,130 acres within the Symmes Creek WSA would be recommended as suitable under the Proposed Action. The WSA would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts relate to how wilderness values would be affected by continuing existing uses within the WSA such as motorized recreation and livestock grazing as well as the development of new projects for livestock and wildlife.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values on the 8,130 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including crucial winter habitat for mule deer, tule elk habitat, as well as the associated riparian habitat along Symmes and Shepherd Creeks. Impacts on wilderness values would result from continued motorized recreation use, proposed livestock grazing projects and continued maintenance and use of the existing water-spreading and diversion channels.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles within the 8,130 acres of the Symmes Creek WSA would result in minor impacts with the potential to impair naturalness not only in the vicinity of the 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the WSA but also throughout the 3,520 acres burnt by a wildfire in 1985. Due to the low success rate of rehabilitation efforts in this blackbrush landscape, no rehabilitation was attempted. Natural revegetation in the western half of the WSA in the area of the wildfire will take a considerable period of time, with no significant regrowth established for 3 to 5 years. Therefore, this portion of the WSA will remain accessible to cross-country travel within the short term.

Construction of three water developments for livestock use would result in only negligible impacts to naturalness. Each water development would result in approximately 25 square feet of surface disturbance and installation of a water trough. Each of these water developments would impair naturalness within an area with a radius of 200 feet from which the projects would be visible (3 acres). The low magnitude of these projects as well as their distance from one another (approximately 3 miles) would render their impact on naturalness almost imperceptible except locally.

Under a right-of-way authorization, the City of Los Angeles would continue to maintain existing water-spreading and diversion channels to prevent flooding of U.S. Highway 395 and adjoining alfalfa fields which lie east of the WSA. The existing water-spreading and diversion channels are located in the east quarter of the WSA and occupy a linear distance of 5 miles. The perceptual impact of these features is low and negligibly impairs the perception of naturalness over an area of 100 acres. These impacts would result from continued berming of soil along the downslope side of the channels from maintenance activities which occurs every 3 years.

Three apiary sites in the southwest portion of the WSA would continue to locally impair naturalness on up to 20 acres each. The large blocks of white beehives currently result in a stark contrast to the natural landscape and are visible from up to 500 feet. However throughout the entire WSA, this would result in only a negligible impact to naturalness.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes would detract from the feeling of solitude primarily in the north and west portions of the WSA. However, the low level of vehicle use, both present and projected (500 visitor days per year) would make these impacts negligible.

Construction of three proposed water developments for livestock use would require the use of motor vehicles over a period of 15 days. The cumulative impact to solitude as a result of vehicle use would be negligible due to the short-term nature and isolation of the projects. Inspection and maintenance of these proposed projects would result in a total of three vehicle trips every three years. Existing use of the livestock driveway would continue to detract from the sense of solitude for 5 days every year along the eastern boundary of the WSA. Placement of salt blocks would continue to require 1 day of vehicle use per year. Overall, livestock activities and associated vehicle use would only negligibly impact solitude on a localized, short-term basis.

Repair or removal of the fish habitat structures in Symmes Creek would only occur once over a 3-day period. Use of vehicles would be required, however the incidence of use which would occur mostly along existing primitive vehicle routes on the north edge of the boundary, would result in only short-term, localized, negligible impacts. Continued fish stocking of Symmes Creek by the California Department of Fish and Game would require the use of a motor vehicle for 1 day approximately 20 times per year. This use would occur along the existing primitive vehicle route on the northern edge of the WSA. This use would only negligibly impact solitude even though it would occur on a somewhat regular basis seasonally each year.

Maintenance of existing water-spreading and diversion channels would continue to disrupt solitude along the east quarter of the WSA. Heavy equipment, including backhoes, bulldozers, and road graders as well as support vehicles is used to maintain these facilities during a period of 2

every 3 years. The use of this heavy equipment degrades solitude during daylight hours in the immediate 100-acre area. Since this use will continue there would be no change in the existing level of solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Primitive and unconfined recreation would be maintained throughout the WSA with only negligible impacts from the continued projected 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use. The lack of existing uses and projected management actions in this WSA would sustain the area's primitive and unconfined recreation uses such as fishing, hunting, and sightseeing.

Special Features

Special features of the WSA such as tule elk habitat, crucial mule deer winter habitat and the riparian habitat along Symmes and Shepherd Creeks would not be impacted by the area's existing uses and projected management actions. The low magnitude of the existing uses and projected management actions would sustain long-term primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities.

Conclusion:

Overall, impacts to wilderness values primarily naturalness and solitude would be negligible and for the most part short term. Construction and maintenance of three proposed livestock facilities as well as the repair or removal of fish structures would insignificantly add to the existing low levels of impact from motorized recreation use and vehicle use for livestock operations and maintenance of water-spreading and diversion channels. The continued existence of apiary sites, existing water-spreading and diversion channels, and proposed water developments would only result in less than 170 acres of impairment of the perception of naturalness.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire WSA would remain open to motorized recreation use on existing routes and trails. There are approximately 6 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. The current motorized recreation use of 500 visitor days would remain stable and is not anticipated to increase. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

The entire WSA would remain open to motorized recreation use on existing routes and trails. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Apiary Sites

Under the Proposed Action the three apiary sites and beekeeping operations in the southern portion of the WSA would be permitted within the WSA. There would be no impacts. Spatial requirements to maintain colony stability established the location of these sites.

Consequences

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on apiary sites within the WSA. Beekeeping operations would be permitted at three existing apiary sites.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

There are no existing uses or proposed management actions that would occur under this proposal that are anticipated to result in any significant unavoidable adverse impacts. Continued motorized recreation use levels would remain stable at 500 visitor days. Surface disturbance associated with development of three water projects for livestock and continued maintenance of 5 miles of water-spreading and diversion channels would result in only short-term localized impacts which would be negligible.

The Relationship Between Short-term Local Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Symmes Creek WSA these uses include hunting, fishing, sightseeing, livestock grazing, wildlife management, and apiary sites for beekeeping. Existing water-spreading and diversion channels benefit long-term productivity by recharging ground water supplies and reducing the potential for flooding. Under the Proposed Action future development options would remain open and long-term productivity is not likely to be impacted.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

There are no projected management actions or use of the WSA that would result in an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. Throughout the WSA there are no existing or proposed activities that would result in more than a negligible impact to wilderness values.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

8,130 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

The entire 8,130 acres within the Symmes Creek WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts of this alternative relate to the elimination of motorized recreational use and beekeeping operations at three apiary sites within the WSA, as well as the benefits to wilderness values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 8,130 acres within the Symmes Creek WSA would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features including crucial winter habitat for mule deer, tule elk habitat, as well as the associated riparian habitats

along Symmes and Shepherd Creeks would be retained. Wilderness values would slightly benefit from the elimination of motorized vehicle use and apiary sites. Continued livestock operations including proposed water developments would continue to have negligible impacts on naturalness and solitude, although restrictions on vehicle use would locally result in slight benefits.

Naturalness

There would be a minor positive effect to naturalness due primarily to the closure of the area to motorized recreation use, even though current vehicular use of the WSA is low and dispersed with 500 visitor days. Six miles of primitive vehicle ways would be closed to vehicles and used for hiking and equestrian trails.

Also resulting in a slight benefit to naturalness, would be the removal of three apiary sites (one-quarter acre each) which impaired the perception of naturalness in the southern portion of the WSA on 20 acres each.

Proposed livestock facilities would be the same as described under the Proposed Action resulting in the same impacts. The three water developments would impair the perception of naturalness over a total of less than 10 acres.

Continued maintenance of 5 miles of water-spreading and diversion channels, would impair naturalness over an area of 100 acres, the same as described under the Proposed Action.

Solitude

The primary benefit to solitude under the All Wilderness Alternative would be the elimination of motorized recreation use. The current level of use is low, (500 visitor days). Overall, there would be a slight positive benefit as a result of eliminating motorized recreation use.

Vehicle use for existing livestock operations primarily sheepherding would be reduced by six vehicle trips which would only slightly benefit solitude in the vicinity of these projects and the livestock driveway along the eastern boundary of the WSA.

Vehicle use associated with the construction and maintenance of the proposed water developments, maintenance of existing water-spreading and diversion channels, as well as repairing or removing fish habitat structures and continued fish stocking, would result in local disruptions of solitude with only negligible impact overall, as described under the Proposed Action.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Primitive and unconfined recreation would be primarily unaffected except for a slight increase in opportunities resulting from closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. As described under the Proposed Action, the lack of existing uses and proposed management actions in the WSA would sustain the area's primitive and unconfined recreation uses such as fishing, hunting and sightseeing.

Consequences

Special Features

Special features including tule elk habitat, crucial mule deer winter habitat, and riparian habitats, would be unaffected under the All Wilderness Alternative, with the possible exception of the wildlife habitat. Elimination of motorized recreation use (500 visitor days) within the WSA would potentially improve the use and value of the crucial winter habitat for mule deer and the tule elk habitat.

Conclusion:

There would be a slight positive benefit to wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude as a result of eliminating 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Locally, wilderness values would be negligibly improved as a result of the removal of three apiary sites and a reduction in vehicle use associated with existing livestock operations and maintenance of facilities. Construction and maintenance of proposed water developments for livestock and the continued maintenance of water-spreading and diversion channels would locally have a minor impact on naturalness and solitude on less than 110 acres.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 8,130 acres within the Symmes Creek WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use, including 6 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Approximately 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. Motorized recreation use is generally associated with access for hunting and fishing as well as general sightseeing. This use would be displaced to other public lands outside the WSA that could absorb this use. Additionally, the majority of the WSA is surrounded by boundary roads that provide vehicle access to the WSA, however, vehicle travel within the WSA would be prohibited. Fishing opportunities along Symmes Creek and Shepherd Creek remain within one-quarter mile of the boundary roads. It is anticipated that 50 visitor days would continue without the use of motorized vehicles within the WSA.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use totaling 500 visitor days would be foregone. This would result in only a minor impact as opportunities for motorized recreation use are available on other public lands outside the WSA and the boundary roads would provide access to users that wish to continue using the area without vehicles.

Impacts on Apiary Sites

Wilderness designation of the WSA would prohibit the location of apiary sites within the WSA. Three one-quarter-acre sites would be eliminated. Due to spatial requirements to maintain colony stability, opportunities to relocate these apiary sites elsewhere are limited. As a result of eliminating the three apiary sites, beekeeping operations will be restricted or

foregone if suitable relocation sites cannot be identified resulting in adverse impacts. Existing beekeeping operations would be phased out to minimize potential impacts.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would eliminate three apiary sites from the WSA. There would be an adverse impact on beekeeping operations due to the lack of suitable relocation sites.

CHIDAGO CANYON WSA
(CA-010-079)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
20,246 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action none of the 20,246 acres within the Chidago Canyon WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the impacts on wilderness values as a result of continued motorized recreation, mining of decorative building stone, and development within the transmission line corridor within the WSA.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values within the 20,246-acre WSA would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including geological features, crucial winter habitat for mule deer, nesting habitat for raptors, and cultural values.

Continued motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, livestock projects, and transmission line corridor development would result in impacts to wilderness values.

Naturalness

The continued use of motorized vehicles within the 20,246-acre WSA would maintain approximately 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 11 miles of trails in an unnatural condition. Current recreation use is 500 visitor days per year with an anticipated increase to a total of 700 visitor days projected. This use would continue to maintain the bare soil condition of these routes and trails. The gently sloping nature of the terrain and uniform composition of low shrubs along with the sizeable expanse of the WSA tend to localize the impairment of the perception of naturalness.

Consequences

While the nature of the landscape renders the WSA vulnerable to indiscriminate ORV use, vehicle use is designated as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. As a result, trail proliferation and impacts to naturalness are anticipated to be minimal within areas outside the existing routes and trails. Overall the presence of these trails is a minor impact on the WSA's natural character.

Development of an underground mine for gold in the northwest portion of the WSA would result in adverse impacts to naturalness. Mining operations within the 100-acre mine site including portals, air shafts, a millsite, tailings, and a waste rock disposal area would result in a direct loss of naturalness. Due to the openness of the landscape and the surface facilities required for the mining activities, the mining operation would be visible from up to 1 mile away. The perception of naturalness would be impaired within a viewshed of up to 2,000 acres. Overall, impacts to naturalness within the WSA would be minor.

In the southeast portion of the WSA, a projected 5-acre quarry site along with less than 1 mile of access road would result in a direct loss of naturalness within the project site. The mining operation for Bishop tuff, a decorative building stone, would impair the perception of naturalness within a 400-acre viewshed along the low en eschelon fault scarps where the stone is quarried. This would result in a localized minor impact to the WSA's overall naturalness due to the geometric quarrying within the natural rock outcrops.

Livestock projects proposed for the WSA include a 5-mile allotment fence and two water developments. The allotment fence would be located north of Chidago Canyon running essentially northwest to southeast through the central portion of the WSA. The post and wire livestock fence would be incongruous within the natural landscape and would be visible from up to 200 feet away. The perception of naturalness would be impaired within 250 acres along the fenceline. The two water developments, each consisting of a storage tank and water trough are located in the northwest portion of the WSA. Surface disturbance would be approximately 25 square feet for each water development and the above ground facilities would be painted to blend with the surrounding landscape to reduce visual contrasts. These water developments would be visible from up to 500 feet away and would each impair the perception of naturalness on up to 20 acres. Overall, livestock projects within the northern portion of the WSA would result in slight localized impacts to naturalness.

Excavation pits related to scientific research would be approximately 1 meter square and would be backfilled and rehabilitated following examination of the cultural survey sites. Excavations for cultural resources if required for the cultural resources survey would be minimal and would result in negligible short-term impacts.

Development of the transmission line corridor along the west boundary of the WSA would impair the perception of naturalness within approximately a 2,000-acre viewshed along the corridor. Potential construction of 4¼ miles of transmission line would result in physical ground disturbance of less than 500 square feet per tower location which would occur every 800

to 1,200 feet along the alignment. Access road construction would be limited to short segments totaling less than 1 mile as primary access would be provided along the existing powerline service road adjacent to the WSA boundary. The moderate impacts to naturalness would occur as a result of the visual contrasts of steel towers within the low shrub landscape. The impacts of construction of multiple towers and powerlines within the corridor in the future, would result in an increased dominance of transmission lines on the area's naturalness, particularly in conjunction with the existing and proposed powerlines within the right-of-way that parallels the WSA.

Solitude

Occasional motorized recreation use on approximately 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 11 miles of trails would continue to distract from the sense of solitude within the WSA. The existing 500 visitor days per year of vehicle use are anticipated to increase slowly to 700 visitor days. This increase would continue to maintain a low level of motor vehicle use dispersed throughout the WSA and would not significantly affect solitude. Due to the broad expansive nature of the WSA and dispersed use patterns impacts to solitude would be minor as a result of projected motorized recreation use.

Development and operation activities associated with the projected underground gold mine including the use of heavy equipment and machinery would detract from the sense of solitude within an area of approximately 2,000 acres surrounding the mine. There would be a localized moderate impact on solitude in the western portion of the WSA as a result of mining activities.

Mining activities associated with quarrying of decorative building stone would disrupt solitude as a result of cutting the raw material from the rock outcrops as well as shaping, sizing and polishing the finished blocks of stone. The noise associated with the mining operation would be audible within an area of approximately 600 acres surrounding the activity. There would be a moderate impact to solitude within the southeast portion of the WSA as a result of mining decorative building stone.

Inspection and maintenance of three wildlife guzzlers in the northwest and central portions of the WSA would result in one vehicle trip every three years. This infrequent use would result in a negligible impact on solitude within the vicinity of the guzzlers and access routes.

Construction of the 5-mile allotment boundary fence for livestock would require the use of a vehicle over a period of 25 days. Construction activities and vehicle use would result in a short-term minor impact to solitude. Subsequent inspection and maintenance of the fence would require vehicle use for 10 days every 5 years. This infrequent use of vehicles would result in short-term negligible impacts.

Development of the two water projects for livestock in the northwest portion of the WSA would result in localized short-term disruptions of solitude during actual construction as well as inspection and maintenance.

Consequences

Initial construction would occur over a 5-day period for each project requiring vehicle use to deliver materials. Inspection and maintenance would be done on a 3-year cycle with one vehicle trip serving both projects. Overall the impacts to solitude would be minor during construction activities and negligible for inspection and maintenance which would require very infrequent vehicle use. Maintenance of the existing pipeline and four water troughs in the northeast portion of the WSA would be infrequent resulting in negligible impacts to solitude.

Continued sheepherding activities would result in vehicle use including trucks, trailers, and water trucks for 5 days per year during the month of June. Vehicle use would occur along the 9-mile livestock driveway on the eastern edge of the WSA. Solitude would be adversely impacted within the vicinity of the livestock driveway when sheepherding activities are occurring. This would result in short-term minor impacts on solitude over the 5 days of use.

Development of potential high voltage transmission lines within the utility corridor along the 4½-mile western boundary of the WSA would result in short-term moderate impacts to solitude. Construction activities would disrupt the sense of solitude within 2,000 acres along the transmission line corridor.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Continued motorized recreation use, including projected increased use, would limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation throughout the WSA in the vicinity of the 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 11 miles of trails. Mining activities would limit primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities within the 100-acre mine site in the northwestern portion of the WSA. Additionally mining of decorative building stone in the southeast portion of the WSA would limit opportunities on 5 acres. Construction of the 5-mile livestock fence through the central portion of the WSA would restrict movement resulting in slight impacts on primitive and unconfined recreation north of Chidago Canyon. The attractiveness of hiking and horseback riding would be diminished by the presence of the developed transmission line corridor within 2,000 acres along the 4½-mile western boundary.

Special Features

Crucial winter habitat for mule deer in the northwest portion of the WSA would be lost on 100 acres as a result of the projected underground gold mine. The low level of dispersed motorized recreation use and short-term periods of construction activities associated with development of the transmission line corridor would not likely disrupt use of the habitat. Less than 1 mile of the livestock fence would protrude into this winter habitat. However, specifications for the suspension type fence would allow movement or passing through resulting in no impacts on use of the habitat. Geological features could be lost on the 105 acres of surface disturbance as a result of the underground gold mine and quarry site for decorative building stone. However, this only affects a very small portion of the WSA and none of the rhyolitic columns within Chidago Canyon would

be impacted. The continued low level of motorized vehicle use and lack of management actions within Chidago Canyon and Red Rock Canyon would not result in any impacts other than very negligible use within the canyon that could disrupt nesting raptors. No surface-disturbing activities are projected in areas with more than a predicted low cultural sensitivity. Prior to approval of surface-disturbing activities such as mining and development of the transmission line corridor, a surface inventory for cultural resources would be conducted to identify cultural sites and establish mitigation measures to ensure protection of cultural values.

Conclusion:

Wilderness values, particularly naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation would be adversely impacted by mining activities and development of the transmission line corridor. Additionally, projected low levels of motorized recreation use as well as continued livestock operations and projected livestock projects would result in slight to minor impacts on naturalness and solitude. Overall, there would be a direct loss of naturalness on 105 acres with the perception of naturalness impaired over an area of 4,690 acres primarily in the northwest portion of the WSA. Solitude would be disrupted within 2,000 acres as a result of mining operations. Short-term impacts ranging from negligible to minor would occur as a result of construction and maintenance of livestock projects. Crucial winter habitat for mule deer would be lost on 100 acres as a result of the underground gold mining activities. Geologic features could be impacted or lost on 105 acres as a result of mining activities. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no impacts other than very negligible impacts are anticipated for special features including raptor nesting habitat and cultural values.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action, motorized recreation use would continue as prescribed in the Benton-Owens Valley MFP which designates the area as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. Approximately 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 11 miles of trails would remain open for use. The existing 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use would slowly increase to a total of 700 visitor days.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is anticipated to increase slowly from the existing 500 visitor days to a total of 700 visitor days.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Under the Proposed Action, the entire one-half-mile width of the transmission line corridor that runs along 4¼ miles of the WSA's west boundary, including the one-quarter width that extends into the WSA, would be available for development. There are current plans to develop a transmission line through this corridor. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes the

corridor to accommodate multiple transmission line needs. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 4¼ miles of the west boundary.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Development of a mining operation for Bishop tuff in the southeast portion of the WSA would occur, requiring less than 1 mile of access roads and a 5-acre quarry. There would be no impacts on the mining of decorative building stone within the WSA as the entire WSA would be open to all forms of mineral entry including mineral sales.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on the mining of decorative building stone. Mineral sales would be permitted. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff is projected for the WSA.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

Mining activities associated with an underground gold mine and mining of decorative building stone as well as the construction of potential high voltage transmission lines would result in unavoidable adverse impacts as a result of surface disturbance. Continued motorized recreation use on 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 11 miles of trails, development of livestock projects including 5 miles of fence and two water developments would not result in any significant impacts. Crucial winter habitat for mule deer would be lost on 100 acres.

Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Chidago Canyon WSA the ongoing uses include motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, sightseeing, livestock grazing, and wildlife habitat management. Under the Proposed Action, mining activities would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 105 acres limiting future development options. Construction of transmission lines within the 4¼-mile utility corridor along the western boundary of the WSA would limit development options within the corridor. For the remainder of the WSA, future development options would remain open. Development of livestock grazing projects and projected motorized recreation use would not likely impact long-term productivity within the WSA.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Mining activities for gold and decorative building stone would result in an irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness values including crucial mule deer winter habitat on 105 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the Bishop tuff. Transmission line development would not likely lead to an irreversible or irretrievable commitment within the utility corridor. Throughout the remainder of the WSA, no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

20,246 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 20,246 acres of the Chidago Canyon WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the beneficial impacts on wilderness values, as well as the effects of mineral development as a result of valid existing rights, and the prohibition of mining of decorative building stone, motorized recreation use, and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative wilderness values within the 20,246-acre Chidago Canyon WSA would be protected by Legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features including crucial deer winter habitat, nesting habitat for raptors, and cultural values would be retained and slightly enhanced. However, mineral development in the western portion of the WSA would continue due to the anticipated determination of valid existing rights. Motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA would be prohibited, benefiting wilderness values.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. Approximately 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 11 miles of trails would be closed to motor vehicle use related to recreation access. The current 500 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use would be eliminated. While these primitive vehicle routes and trails would slowly begin to naturally revegetate with the surrounding low shrubs and annual plants, projected hiking and horseback riding use of 300 visitor days per year would maintain the appearance of a trail within the existing routes. Additionally, infrequent motor vehicle use for inspection and maintenance of livestock facilities would continue to occur in the northern portion of the WSA.

Projected underground gold mining activities in the western portion of the WSA described under the Proposed Action are anticipated to continue under wilderness designation as a result of the projected determination of valid existing rights. The impacts would be the same as those identified under the Proposed Action including the loss of naturalness on 100 acres and the impairment of the perception of naturalness within a 2,000-acre viewshed.

Mining of decorative building stone would be precluded under wilderness designation. Naturalness would be retained within the projected 5-acre quarry site in the southeast portion of the WSA and the perception of naturalness within the 400-acre viewshed would remain unchanged.

As described under the Proposed Action, construction and maintenance of the 5-mile allotment boundary fence and two water developments for livestock would impair the perception of naturalness within 290 acres with an overall slight impact on naturalness.

Excavation pits anticipated for the proposed cultural resource survey would result in negligible short-term impacts on naturalness as described under the Proposed Action.

Development of power lines within the 4½-mile-long portion of the transmission line corridor inside the WSA would be precluded. Naturalness would be enhanced within the 2,000-acre viewshed along the west boundary of the WSA by not contributing to the visual impacts of the powerlines within the adjacent portion of the transmission line corridor.

Solitude

The prohibition of motorized recreation use within the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to solitude. Due to the low level of vehicle use (500 visitor days) on the existing 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 11 miles of trails, solitude would be slightly enhanced.

Inspection and maintenance of the three existing wildlife guzzlers would be infrequent resulting in negligible impacts to solitude as described under the Proposed Action.

Mining activities associated with the underground mine in the western portion of the WSA would continue as described under the Proposed Action. Solitude would be adversely affected within a 2,000-acre area resulting in moderate localized impacts.

Mining of decorative building stone would be prohibited under wilderness designation. The sense of solitude would be retained within the project area and surrounding 600 acres that would have been impacted under the Proposed Action as a result of mining activities.

Construction and maintenance of the two proposed water projects for livestock and the 5-mile-long allotment boundary fence as well as maintenance of existing livestock facilities would occur as described under the Proposed Action with the same localized slight to minor impacts to solitude which would be infrequent or short-term in nature.

Continued use of the livestock driveway would occur under the All Wilderness Alternative with the exception of the vehicle use, which would be accommodated on Fish Slough Road outside the WSA to the east. Solitude would be slightly benefited during the 5-day period of sheepherding use as a result of precluding the associated vehicle use from occurring within the WSA.

Development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the 4¼-mile-long western boundary would be precluded with no construction activities occurring to impact solitude. Solitude would generally be retained along the western boundary of the WSA in the vicinity of the transmission line corridor.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained throughout the WSA with the exception of areas surrounding the 5-mile livestock fence proposed for construction north of Chidago Canyon and projected mining activity in the western portion of the WSA. The fence would restrict movement within the central portion of the WSA resulting in slight impacts on primitive and unconfined recreation. Mining activities would limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation within the 100-acre mine site in the northwest portion of the WSA. Eliminating 500 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor would enhance opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in the WSA.

Special Features

Crucial winter habitat for mule deer would be lost on 100 acres in the northwest portion of the WSA as a result of the projected underground gold mine. Additionally, the mining activity would result in a loss of geological features within the 100-acre mine site. However this affects a very small portion of the WSA and none of the rhyolitic columns within the WSA would be impacted. Less than 1 mile of the livestock fence would protrude into the mule deer winter habitat. However, specifications for the suspension type fence would allow movement or passing through resulting in no impacts on use of the habitat. Prior to approval of surface-disturbing activities for the underground gold mine, a surface inventory would be conducted within this area of low predicted cultural sensitivity to identify cultural sites and develop mitigation measures, if necessary, to ensure protection of cultural values. By eliminating motorized recreation use as well as prohibiting mining of decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor, special features within the WSA would be slightly enhanced.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values in the WSA by eliminating motorized recreation use (500 visitor days) as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the western boundary. Wilderness values in the northwest portion of

the WSA would be adversely affected by development of an underground gold mine due to the high probability of determination of valid existing rights. Construction and maintenance of existing and proposed livestock facilities would result in slight to minor localized impacts on naturalness and negligible to minor short-term impacts on solitude. Overall, naturalness within the WSA would be lost on 100 acres with the perception of naturalness impaired on 2,290 acres. Solitude would be diminished on 2,000 acres as a result of mining activities. Crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost and geological features could be lost on 100 acres as a result of mining activities.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation would result in closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. The entire 20,246 acres of the WSA including 25 miles of primitive vehicle routes as well as 11 miles of trails used by motorcycles would be closed to recreational vehicle use, eliminating approximately 500 visitor days of motorized recreation. These users would most likely relocate to public lands outside the WSA where similar opportunities for hunting and sightseeing are available. This displaced use could be absorbed on public lands outside the WSA. Due to the low level of use occurring within the WSA and the availability of opportunities outside the WSA, there would only be a slight impact on motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 500 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. Due to the projected low level of use within the WSA and the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA, there would be a slight impact on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Wilderness designation would preclude use of the one-quarter-mile width of the transmission line corridor that extends into the WSA along 4¼ miles of the west boundary. The remaining one-quarter-mile width of the one-half-mile-wide corridor lies outside the WSA and would be available for development of a transmission line. While this may limit flexibility in planning the alignment of a transmission line, it would not preclude development. There is currently a proposal to develop a transmission line through this corridor. There would be a minor impact due to the constrained width of the utility corridor available for development. Multiple transmission line development would be moderately impacted due to the limited opportunities available within the remaining portion of the corridor to accommodate additional transmission lines. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter-mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Mineral sales would be prohibited in the 20,246-acre WSA under the All Wilderness Alternative. Development of a 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. Bishop tuff is currently in high demand and is available in areas outside the WSA. Therefore, the result would only be a minor impact on the mining of decorative building stone.

Conclusion:

Mining of decorative building stone, including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. There would be only a minor impact as Bishop tuff is available in areas outside the WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

8,326 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
11,920 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative 8,326 acres within the Chidago Canyon WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 11,920 acres would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the beneficial effects on wilderness values, as well as the effects of mineral development and development of the transmission line on wilderness values. Impacts also relate to the prohibition of motorized recreation use and mining of decorative building stone within the portion of the WSA designated as wilderness.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 8,326 acres would be designated as wilderness, and would receive special legislative protection for wilderness values. Within the remaining 11,920 acres not designated as wilderness, none of the wilderness values would receive the special legislative protection. Wilderness values throughout the WSA include naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features which include crucial winter habitat for mule deer, nesting habitat for raptors, cultural values, and geological features.

Wilderness values within the nondesignated portion of the WSA would be subjected to multiple resource management including continued motorized recreation use, development of an underground gold mine, proposed livestock projects, and development of the transmission line corridor.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use (150 visitor days) and closing 2 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 5 miles of trails within the 8,326 acres designated as wilderness. While these routes would slowly begin to naturally revegetate with the surrounding low shrubs and annual plants,

projected hiking and horseback riding use of 300 visitor days per year would maintain the appearance of a trail within the existing routes. Vehicle use associated with livestock grazing is not anticipated in this portion of the WSA, enhancing the natural revegetation of the existing routes and trails.

Mining of decorative building stone projected for this portion of the WSA would be precluded under wilderness designation. Naturalness would be retained within the anticipated 5-acre quarry site in the southeast portion of the WSA and the perception of naturalness within the 400-acre viewshed would remain unchanged.

Excavation pits anticipated for the proposed cultural resource survey would potentially occur in either the designated or nondesignated portion of the WSA. As described under the Proposed Action negligible short-term impacts on naturalness would occur as the result of potential excavation pits if required for the cultural resource survey.

The continued use of motorized vehicles within the remaining 11,920 acres would maintain approximately 23 miles of primitive vehicle routes in an unnatural condition. Current recreation use is 350 visitor days per year which is anticipated to slowly increase to 600 visitor days. This use would continue to maintain the bare soil condition of these routes and trails. The gently sloping nature of the terrain and uniform composition of low shrubs tend to localize the impairment of naturalness. While the nature of the landscape renders the WSA vulnerable to indiscriminate ORV use, vehicle use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails. As a result, trail proliferation and impacts to naturalness are anticipated to be minimal within areas outside the existing primitive vehicle routes. Overall, the presence of these trails is a minor impact on the WSA's natural character.

The projected underground gold mine in the northwest portion of the WSA would not be within the designated area. Development of the underground mine would occur as described under the Proposed Action with the same impacts. Naturalness would be lost on 100 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired within a 2,000-acre viewshed.

The proposed livestock projects would be located in the northern portion of the WSA which would not be designated as wilderness. As described under the Proposed Action construction and maintenance of the 5 miles of allotment boundary fence and the two water developments for livestock would impair the perception of naturalness on 290 acres with an overall slight impact on naturalness.

Development of powerlines within the 4½-mile-long portion of the transmission line corridor would occur within the portion of the WSA not designated as wilderness. The impacts of constructing powerlines within this transmission line corridor along the western boundary of the WSA would be the same as the Proposed Action with moderate impacts to naturalness. The perception of naturalness would be impaired within a 2,000-acre viewshed along this corridor.

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude would be slightly improved within the 8,326 acres designated as wilderness as a result of closing the area to motorized recreation use. Due to the low level of dispersed vehicle use (150 visitor days) on 2 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 5 miles of motorcycle trails, solitude would be slightly enhanced.

Mining of decorative building stone projected for the designated portion of the WSA would be prohibited. The sense of solitude would be retained within the projected mining area and surrounding 600 acres that would have been impacted under the Proposed Action as a result of mining activities.

A 5½-mile portion of the livestock driveway located along the eastern boundary of the WSA would be within the portion of the WSA designated wilderness. Continued use of the livestock driveway would occur under wilderness designation with the exception of the vehicle use which would be accommodated on Fish Slough Road outside the WSA. As described under the All Wilderness Alternative solitude would be slightly benefited during the 5-day period of sheepherding use.

Motorized recreation use within the 11,920 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness would continue on 23 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 6 miles of motorcycle trails. This use is anticipated to increase from the current 350 visitor days per year to a total of 600 visitor days. This increase would continue to maintain a low level of motor vehicle use and would not significantly affect solitude. Due to the broad expansive nature of the WSA and dispersed use patterns, impacts to solitude would be minor.

The three existing wildlife guzzlers are located in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. As described under the Proposed Action, the impacts of one vehicle trip every 3 years for inspection and maintenance would result in negligible impacts.

Mining activities associated with the underground gold mine located in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would adversely affect solitude within a 2,000-acre area resulting in moderate localized impacts as described under the Proposed Action.

Construction and maintenance of the proposed livestock projects as well as maintenance of the existing livestock facilities which would be in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would result in the same localized slight to minor impacts on solitude which would be infrequent or short term in nature as described under the Proposed Action.

A 3½-mile portion of the livestock driveway located along the eastern edge of the WSA would be in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Vehicle use within the livestock driveway would result in seasonal, short-term, minor impacts as described under the Proposed Action.

Development of the transmission line corridor along the 4½-mile western boundary would occur in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Powerline construction would result in short-term, moderate impacts to solitude as described under the Proposed Action. The sense of solitude would be disrupted within 2,000 acres along the transmission line corridor.

Consequences

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Within the 8,326 acres of the WSA designated wilderness, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be. Eliminating 150 visitor days of motorized recreation use and prohibiting mining of decorative building stone would slightly enhance primitive and unconfined recreation.

Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities within the 11,920 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness would be limited as a result of projected motorized recreation use (600 visitor days) of 23 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 6 miles of trails. Development of the underground gold mine would diminish opportunities within the 100-acre project site. Additionally, the 5-mile livestock allotment boundary fence would restrict movement resulting in slight impacts on primitive and unconfined recreation north of Chidago Canyon. The attractiveness of uses such as hiking and horseback riding would be diminished by the presence of the developed transmission line corridor along the 4½-mile western boundary.

Special Features

Special features including habitat a small portion of the crucial winter habitat for mule deer, cultural values, and geological features would be retained within the 8,326 acres south of Chidago Canyon that would be designated as wilderness.

Within the remaining 11,920 acres, 100 acres of crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost and geological features could be lost in the northwest portion of the WSA as a result of development of an underground gold mine. The low level of dispersed motorized recreation use and short-term periods of construction for the activities associated with the transmission line corridor would not likely affect any of the WSA's special features with the possible exception of cultural resource values. Prior to approval of surface-disturbing activities for mining a surface inventory for cultural resource values would be conducted to identify cultural sites and would establish mitigation measures to ensure protection of cultural values.

Conclusion

Designation of 8,326 acres within the WSA as wilderness would result in slight positive benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude as a result of eliminating 150 visitor days of motorized recreation use and prohibiting mining of decorative building stone. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and special features would be slightly enhanced.

Within the 11,920 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, projected motorized recreation use (600 visitor days), development of an underground gold mine, construction and maintenance of livestock projects and development of the transmission line corridor would adversely affect wilderness values. Naturalness would be lost on 100 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired on 4,290 acres. The sense of solitude would be diminished within 2,000 acres

surrounding the projected underground gold mine. Additionally, construction of the transmission line corridor would result in localized, short-term impacts. Approximately 100 acres of crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost in the northwest portion of the WSA. Overall, there would be a minor impact to wilderness values with moderate, localized impacts anticipated.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited on approximately 44% of the WSA as a result of designating 8,326 acres as wilderness. This would result in the closure of 2 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 5 miles of motorcycle trails eliminating approximately 150 visitor days of use. This displaced use would shift to the 11,920 acres not designated wilderness where the majority of the WSA's existing primitive vehicle routes and trails are located as well as other areas where similar opportunities are available outside the WSA. Therefore, there would be only slight impacts to motorized recreation use within the designated portion of the WSA.

Within the 11,920 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness the existing 20 miles of primitive vehicle routes and 6 miles of motorcycle trail would remain open for motorized recreation use. The existing 350 visitor days would increase slowly to a total of 600 visitor days as a result of displaced use from the designated portion of the WSA and increased demand. There would be no impact on motorized recreation use within the nondesignated portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be a slight impact as wilderness designation would preclude 150 visitor days of motorized recreation use within the designated portion of the WSA. However, within the nondesignated portion there would be no impacts on motorized recreation use with the current 350 visitor days anticipated to increase to a total of 600 visitor days.

Impacts on Transmission Line Development

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, the entire one-half-mile width of the transmission line corridor that runs along 4¼ miles of the west boundary of the WSA would be available for use. The portion of the WSA not designated wilderness includes the one-quarter-mile width of the corridor that lies within the WSA. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes the corridor to accommodate multiple transmission line needs. There are current plans to develop a transmission line through this corridor. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width of the corridor within the WSA along 4¼ miles of the west boundary would be in the portion not designated as wilderness.

Consequences

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 8,326 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would be closed to mineral sales including decorative building stone. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. Bishop tuff is currently in high demand and is available outside the WSA. Therefore, the result would only be a minor impact on the mining of decorative building stone.

Within the 11,920 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, mineral sales including decorative building stone would be permitted. However, no sources of Bishop tuff have been identified within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA and no development is anticipated. Since the nondesignated area would be open to mineral sales there would be no impact in this portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on mining of decorative building stone within the 8,326 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral sales including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff.

Within the 11,920 acres not designated wilderness mineral sales would be permitted. However, no mining of decorative building stone is anticipated due to the lack of identified sources. There would be no impact.

FISH SLOUGH WSA
(CA-010-080)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
14,450 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action none of the 14,450 acres within the Fish Slough WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the impacts on wilderness values as a result of continued motorized recreation, mining for decorative building stone, and development within the transmission line corridor.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values within the 14,450 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including habitat for reintroduced

pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and the geological features of the WSA. Continued motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, construction of a livestock fence, and development within the transmission line corridor would result in impacts to wilderness values.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles within the 14,450-acre WSA would maintain approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes in an unnatural condition. Current motorized recreation use is 350 visitor days per year which is anticipated to slowly increase to a projected 550 visitor days. This use would continue to maintain the bare soil condition of the vehicle routes. The broad spaciousness of the WSA as well as the gently sloping terrain covered by low shrubs tend to localize the impairment of the perception of naturalness. While the openness of the WSA makes it vulnerable to indiscriminate ORV use, vehicle use is designated as limited to existing or designated routes and trails minimizing impacts outside the existing primitive vehicle routes. Overall motorized recreation use results in minor impacts to naturalness.

Development of a 5-acre quarry site and mining operation for Bishop tuff, a decorative building stone along with construction of less than 12 mile of access roads would result in adverse impacts to naturalness in the southeast portion of the WSA. Excavations within the 5-acre quarry site would result in a direct loss of naturalness. The mining operation would impair the perception of naturalness within a 400-acre viewshed along the low en echelon fault scarps where the stone is quarried. This would result in a localized minor impact to the WSA's overall natural character due to the geometric quarrying within the natural rock outcrops.

The proposed 1-mile-long livestock fence across the southern tip of the WSA would result in slight localized impacts to naturalness. The post and wire fence would be incongruous within the natural landscape. The perception of naturalness would be impaired along the fenceline from within a distance of 200 feet resulting in an area of 50 acres that would be affected.

Development of the transmission line corridor along 2¼ miles of the western boundary of the WSA would impair the perception of naturalness within approximately a 2,000-acre viewshed. Potential construction of transmission lines would result in physical ground disturbance of less than 250 square feet per tower location which would occur every 800 to 1,200 feet along the alignment. Access road construction would total up to 2 miles and would be limited to short segments originating from the existing transmission line service road adjacent to the WSA boundary. The moderate impacts of construction of multiple towers and powerlines within the corridor in the future would result in an increased visual dominance of transmission lines on the area's naturalness, particularly in conjunction with the existing and proposed powerlines within the right-of-way that parallels the WSA.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use dispersed throughout the WSA on approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to distract from the sense of solitude within the WSA. The current 350 visitor days of motorized recreation use related to recreation activities is projected to increase to a total of 550 visitor days. This increase would continue to maintain a low level of use and would not significantly affect solitude due to the expansiveness of the WSA, variety of terrain, and dispersed patterns of use. Overall, impacts to solitude would be minor as a result of projected motorized recreation use.

Mining activity associated with quarrying decorative building stone would disrupt solitude in the southeast portion of the WSA. The noise associated with the mining operation, particularly cutting the raw material from the rock outcrops as well as shaping, sizing and polishing the finished blocks of stones would be audible within an area of approximately 600 acres surrounding the activity. There would be a moderate impact to solitude within the southeast portion of the WSA as a result of mining decorative building stone.

Development of 1 mile of fence to control livestock drift would result in localized short-term disruptions of solitude during actual construction as well as inspection and maintenance. Initial construction would require the use of a vehicle over a 5-day period for delivery of materials. Subsequent inspection and maintenance would occur on a 5-year cycle necessitating two vehicle trips for each cycle. Overall the impacts on solitude would be minor during actual construction while maintenance activities would be infrequent resulting in negligible impacts.

Continued sheepherding activities within the 5-mile-long livestock driveway would require the use of trucks, trailers, and water trucks. Solitude would be intermittently disrupted during the 6-week grazing system season during May and June. Within the vicinity of the livestock driveway, there would be a minor short-term impact to solitude while sheep are being driven along the southeast boundary of the WSA.

Development of potential high voltage transmission lines within the utility corridor along the 2½-mile west boundary would result in short-term impacts to solitude. Construction activities would disrupt the sense of solitude within 2,000 acres area along the corridor.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Continued motorized recreation use, including projected increased use, would limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation throughout the WSA in the vicinity of the 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Mining of decorative building stone would diminish opportunities within the 5-acre quarry site which would not result in any perceptible impacts overall within the WSA. Construction of the 1 mile of livestock fencing would result in only negligible impacts, if any, on primitive and unconfined recreation. The attractiveness of uses such as hiking and horseback riding would be diminished by the presence of the developed transmission line corridor within the 2,000-acre viewshed along the 2½-mile corridor.

Special Features

Special features within the WSA would not be significantly impacted by any of the management actions under the Proposed Action. The habitat utilized by reintroduced pronghorn antelope would be affected by minor disruptions of use during periods of powerline construction within the transmission line corridor. Continued motorized recreation use and livestock grazing operations including 1 mile of fence would not impact the pronghorn antelope habitat due to the low levels of use. Livestock fencing would meet the specifications of suspension fencing to accommodate the movement or passing through of the pronghorn antelope. Cultural resource sensitivity is predicted to be low in the portions of the WSA where the transmission line corridor would be developed and mining of decorative stone would occur. Additionally, surface inventories for cultural resources would be conducted prior to approval of surface-disturbing activities to determine mitigation measures if necessary. The mining operation for decorative building stone would require quarrying natural rock outcrops which would result in slight localized impacts to the low en eschelon fault scarps that are a component of the geologic features of the WSA. However, the mining activity would be insignificant in regards to the overall geology of the WSA.

Conclusion:

Mining activities associated with the 5-acre quarry for decorative building stone and development of the 2½-mile transmission line corridor along the western boundary would result in the primary impacts on wilderness values. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over 2,400 acres and there would be a direct loss of naturalness on 5 acres. Solitude within the WSA would be diminished within a 600-acre area surrounding the mining activities resulting in a moderate impact. Additional short-term disruptions to solitude would occur within an area of 2,000 acres along the transmission line corridor during powerline construction activities. Projected motorized recreation use (550 visitor days) and livestock grazing activities including construction of 1 mile of fence would result in slight to minor impacts to wilderness values. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be slightly impacted on a localized basis as a result of projected motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, and development of the transmission line corridor. There would be slight localized impacts to special features.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action, motorized recreation use would continue as prescribed in the Benton-Owens Valley MFP which designates the area as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would remain open for use. The existing 350 visitor days of motorized recreation use would slowly increase to a total of 550 visitor days.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is anticipated to increase slowly from the existing 350 visitor days to a total of 550 visitor days.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Under the Proposed Action, the entire one-half-mile width that runs along 2¼ miles of the WSA's west boundary, including the one-quarter width that extends into the WSA, would be available for development. There are current plans to develop a transmission line through this corridor. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes the corridor to accommodate multiple transmission line needs. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 2¼ miles of the west boundary.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Development of a mining operation for Bishop tuff in the northeast portion of the WSA would occur, requiring less than 1 mile of access roads and a 5-acre quarry. There would be no impacts on the mining of decorative building stone within the WSA as the entire WSA would be open to all forms of mineral entry.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on the mining of decorative building stone. Mineral sales would be permitted. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff is projected for the WSA.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

Mining activities associated with the mining of decorative building stone and the construction of potential high voltage transmission lines would result in unavoidable adverse impacts as a result of surface disturbance. Projected motorized recreation use (550 visitor days) on approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes and the construction of 1 mile of livestock fence would not result in any significant adverse impacts.

Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Fish Slough WSA the ongoing uses include motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, sightseeing, and livestock grazing. Under the Proposed Action, projected mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 5 acres. Construction of transmission lines within the 2¼-mile utility

corridor along the western boundary of the WSA would result in minor impacts to long-term productivity and would limit development options within the corridor. For the remainder of the WSA, future development options would remain open. Development of the 1-mile livestock fence and projected motorized recreation use would not likely impact long-term productivity.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Mining activity for decorative building stone would result in an irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness values on 5 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the Bishop tuff. Transmission line development would not likely lead to an irreversible or irretrievable commitment within the utility corridor. Throughout the remainder of the WSA, no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are projected.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

14,450 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this Alternative, the entire 14,450 acres of the Fish Slough WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the protection of wilderness values and the prohibition of motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative wilderness values within the 14,450-acre Fish Slough WSA would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and the special features of the WSA including habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geological features would be retained. Wilderness values would benefit by prohibiting motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, and development of a transmission line corridor within the WSA.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motorized recreation use eliminating 350 visitor days of vehicle use annually. While these primitive vehicle routes would slowly begin to naturally revegetate with the surrounding low shadscale scrub vegetation, projected hiking and horseback riding of 250 visitor days would maintain the appearance of a trail within the existing routes.

Projected mining activity associated with quarrying decorative building stone would be precluded. Naturalness would be retained within the 5-acre quarry site and the perception of naturalness within a 400-acre viewshed would remain unchanged.

The proposed 1-mile livestock fence would result in slight localized impacts to naturalness as described under the Proposed Action. The perception of naturalness would be impaired within an area of 50 acres as the post and wire fence would be visible from up to 200 feet away.

Development of power lines within the 2½-mile portion of the transmission line corridor inside the WSA would be precluded. Naturalness would be enhanced within the 2,000-acre viewshed along the west boundary of the WSA by not contributing to the visual impacts of the powerlines within the adjacent transmission line corridor.

Solitude

The prohibition of motorized recreation use within the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to solitude. Due to the low level of vehicle use (350 visitor days) which is confined to approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes, solitude would be enhanced slightly.

Mining of decorative building stone would be prohibited under wilderness designation. The sense of solitude would be retained within the proposed project area and the 600 acres surrounding the quarry site in the southeast portion of the WSA.

Construction of 1 mile of fence to control livestock drift would result in minor localized short-term impacts. Additionally, inspection and maintenance of the fence would occur on a 5-year cycle resulting in the same negligible impacts as described under the Proposed Action.

Solitude would be slightly enhanced in the vicinity of the livestock driveway along the eastern boundary as vehicle use associated with sheepherding would be accommodated along the boundary road outside the WSA. Approximately 7 days of vehicle use per year primarily during the month of June would continue resulting in negligible short-term impacts on solitude.

Development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along 2½ miles of the WSA's western boundary would be precluded with no construction activities to impact solitude. Solitude would generally be retained along the western boundary of the WSA in the vicinity of the transmission line corridor.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained throughout the WSA. Eliminating 350 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding mining of decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA would enhance primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. Construction of the 1 mile of livestock fence would result in only negligible impacts, if any, on primitive and unconfined recreation.

Special Features

Special features including habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geologic features would be retained. By eliminating motorized recreation use as well as prohibiting mining activities and development of the transmission line corridor these special features would be slightly enhanced by precluding surface disturbance and potential conflicts with use of the habitat. Construction of 1 mile of livestock fence would not impact use of the pronghorn antelope habitat due to specifications that accommodate the movement or passing through of pronghorn antelope.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by eliminating 350 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the western boundary. The proposed livestock fence would result in slight to minor localized impacts to wilderness values and impair the perception of naturalness on 50 acres. Special features including habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geological features would be slightly enhanced.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation would result in closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. The entire 14,450 acres of the WSA including 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes which would be closed to recreational vehicle use, eliminating approximately 350 visitor days of motorized recreation. These users would most likely relocate to public lands outside the WSA that offer similar opportunities for hunting and sightseeing. This displaced use could be absorbed on public lands outside the WSA. Due to the low level of use occurring within the WSA and the availability of opportunities outside the WSA, there would only be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 350 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. Due to the projected low level of use within the WSA and the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA, there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Wilderness designation would preclude use of the one-quarter-mile width of the utility corridor that extends into the WSA along 2¼ miles of the west boundary. The remaining one-quarter-mile width of the one-half-mile-wide corridor lies outside the WSA and would be available for development of a transmission line. While this may limit flexibility in planning the alignment of a transmission line, it would not preclude development. Additionally, the current proposal for upgrading the powerline within the

existing right-of-way would be allowed in order to accommodate an additional transmission line. There would be a minor impact due to the constrained width of the utility corridor available for development.

However, should the Casa Diablo WSA to the west of Fish Slough WSA also be designated wilderness, the only route available between the two WSAs would be within the existing way with a transmission line. This existing right-of-way is already planned to accommodate a proposed transmission line. Any additional lines would have to be routed to the west around the Casa Diablo WSA. This would result in potential moderate adverse impacts on the future development of the transmission line corridor.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter-mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use. However, should the Casa Diablo WSA also be designated wilderness there would be a potential moderate impact to the future development of the transmission line corridor, since this corridor would be entirely within areas designated as wilderness.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Mineral sales would be prohibited in the 14,450-acre WSA under the All Wilderness Alternative. Development of a 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. Bishop tuff is currently in high demand and is available in areas outside the WSA. Therefore, the result would only be a minor impact on the mining of decorative building stone.

Conclusion:

Mining of decorative building stone, including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. There would be only a minor impact as Bishop tuff is available in areas outside the WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

14,240 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
210 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative 14,240 acres within the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 210 acres constitutes the one-quarter-mile-wide portion of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the 2¼-mile western boundary. This alternative is essentially the same as the All Wilderness Alternative including the same management actions with the exception of precluding the transmission line corridor from wilderness designation and permitting the development of powerlines within this corridor.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the beneficial effects on wilderness values as a result of precluding motorized recreation use and mining activities for decorative building stone. However, development of the the transmission line corridor in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would result in impacts on the WSA's wilderness values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, wilderness values on 14,240 acres which amounts to over 98% of the WSA would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geological features would be retained. Motorized recreation use and mining of decorative building stone would be prohibited benefiting wilderness values.

The remaining 210 acres within the WSA would not receive any of the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. The nondesignated portion of the WSA is the portion of the transmission line corridor that extends one-quarter mile into the WSA along the 2¼-mile western boundary. The transmission line corridor would be developed resulting in impacts on the WSA's wilderness values.

Naturalness

Prohibiting motorized recreation use and mining of decorative building stone would result in a slight positive benefit overall to naturalness which would be retained as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. There would be no motorized recreation use or mining activities anticipated within the remaining 210 acres of the WSA resulting in naturalness being retained.

The proposed 1 mile of livestock fence would occur within the portion of the WSA designated as wilderness. There would be slight localized impacts as described under the Proposed Action. The perception of naturalness within an area of 50 acres would be impaired as the post and wire fence would be visible from up to 200 feet away.

Development of the transmission line corridor along the west boundary of the WSA would occur in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Construction of powerlines within this 2¼-mile corridor as described under the Proposed Action would impair the perception of naturalness within approximately a 2,000-acre viewshed. There would be a moderate impact to naturalness as a result of the visual contrasts of multiple towers and powerlines within the surrounding low shadscale scrub landscape.

Solitude

The prohibition of motorized recreation use and projected mining activities for decorative building stone within the 14,240 acres of the designated portion of the WSA would retain solitude and result in a slight positive benefit as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. Within the remaining 210 acres not designated wilderness, no motorized recreation use or mining activities are projected that would diminish solitude.

Consequences

The proposed 1-mile livestock fence would be within the designated portion of the WSA and would result in the same negligible impacts described under the Proposed Action.

The livestock driveway located along the eastern boundary would be within the designated portion of the WSA. Solitude would be slightly enhanced by relocating vehicle use outside the WSA along the boundary road as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. Approximately 7 days of vehicle use per year primarily during the month of June would continue, resulting in negligible short-term impacts on solitude.

Development of the transmission line corridor within the portion of the WSA not designated wilderness would result in the same short-term moderate impacts to solitude as described under the Proposed Action.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained within the 14,240 acres designated as wilderness. Eliminating 350 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding mining of decorative building stone would enhance primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. Construction of the 1 mile of livestock fence would result in only negligible impacts, if any, on primitive and unconfined recreation.

Within the 210-acre nondesignated portion of the WSA the attractiveness of uses such as hiking and horseback riding would be diminished by the presence of the developed transmission line corridor within the 2,000-acre viewshed along the 2½-mile corridor. This area also includes portions of the WSA designated as wilderness that are within the viewshed of the corridor.

Special Features

Special features including habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geological features would be retained within the 14,240 acres designated wilderness. By eliminating motorized recreation use and prohibiting mining of decorative building stone these special features would be slightly enhanced by precluding surface disturbance and activities that could create potential conflicts. Livestock fencing would not impact the use of pronghorn antelope habitat due to construction specifications that accommodate the movement or passing through of pronghorn antelope.

Within the remaining 210 acres, development of the transmission line corridor, as described under the Proposed Action, would not result in any impacts to special features except that the pronghorn antelope use of the habitat would be slightly affected during periods of powerline construction within the transmission line corridor. Cultural resource sensitivity is predicted to be low within the transmission line corridor. Additionally, surface inventories for cultural resources would be conducted prior to approval of surface-disturbing activities to determine mitigation measures if necessary. There are no mining activities or motorized recreation use projected for this portion of the WSA.

Conclusion

Wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced within the 14,240 acres of the WSA (over 98%) designated as wilderness. Motorized recreation use (350 visitor days) and mining activities for decorative building stone would be eliminated, benefiting wilderness values. The proposed 1-mile livestock fence would result in slight to minor impacts to wilderness values and impair the perception of naturalness on 50 acres. Special features including habitat for pronghorn antelope, cultural values, and geological features would be slightly enhanced.

Within the 210 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, development of the 2¼-mile transmission line corridor would result in adverse impacts on wilderness values including impairing the perception of naturalness within a 2,000-acre viewshed that extends into the designated portion of the WSA. Short-term disruptions would also occur within the same 2,000-acre area as a result of powerline construction activities within the transmission line corridor.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would have the same impacts on motorized recreation use as the All Wilderness Alternative. The only difference between the two alternatives is the exclusion of a utility corridor along 2¼ miles of the west boundary of the WSA which totals 210 acres. Since no vehicle routes are in the nondesignated area and motorized recreation use is limited to existing or designated routes, the impacts on motorized recreation use would be the same as under the All Wilderness Alternative. There would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use with 350 visitor days eliminated as a result of wilderness designation.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 350 visitor days would be foregone within the designated portion of the WSA which amounts to over 98% of the WSA. There is no motorized vehicle use or existing primitive vehicle routes within the remaining 210 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness. Overall there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Transmission Line Development

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, the entire one-half-mile width of the utility line corridor that runs along 2¼ miles of the west boundary of the WSA would be available for use. The portion of the WSA not designated wilderness includes the one-quarter-mile width of the corridor that lies within the WSA. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes the corridor to accommodate multiple transmission line needs. There are current plans to develop a transmission line through this corridor. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Consequences

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width of the corridor within the WSA along 2½ miles of the west boundary would be in the portion not designated as wilderness.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 14,240 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would be closed to mineral sales including decorative building stone. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. Bishop tuff is currently in high demand and is available outside the WSA. Therefore, the result would only be a minor impact on the mining of decorative building stone.

Within the 210 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, mineral sales including decorative building stone would be permitted. However, no sources of Bishop tuff have been identified within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA and no development is anticipated. Since the nondesignated area would be open to mineral sale there would be no impact in this portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on mining of decorative building stone within the 14,240 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral sales including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff.

Within the 210 acres not designated wilderness mineral sales would be permitted. However, no mining of decorative building stone is anticipated. There would be no impact.

VOLCANIC TABLELAND WSA
(CA-010-081)

PROPOSED ACTION (No Wilderness/No Action)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
11,840 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, none of the 11,840 acres within the Volcanic Tableland WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA would be manage for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the impacts on wilderness values continued motorized recreations use, mining for decorative building stone, and development within in the transmission line corridor

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values on the 11,840 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and reintroduced pronghorn antelope habitat as a special feature of the WSA. Continued motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, livestock projects, and transmission line development would result in impacts to wilderness values.

Naturalness

The continued use of motorized vehicles within the 11,840-acre WSA would maintain approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes in an unnatural condition. Current motorized recreation use is 300 visitor days per year with a projected increase to a total of 500 visitor days anticipated. This use would continue to maintain the bare soil condition of the vehicle routes. The gently sloping nature of the terrain and low shrub vegetation along with the broad spaciousness of the WSA tend to localize the impairment of the perception of naturalness. While the nature of the landscape makes the WSA vulnerable to indiscriminate ORV use, vehicle use is designated as limited to existing or designated routes and trails, minimizing impacts outside the existing primitive vehicle routes.

Development of a 5-acre quarry site along the 1 mile of access road in the southeast portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of naturalness within the project site. The mining operation for Bishop tuff, a decorative building stone would impair the perception of naturalness within an area totaling approximately 400 acres, along the low en eschelon fault scarps where the stone is quarried. This would result in a localized minor impact to the WSA's overall naturalness, due to the geometric quarrying within the natural rock outcrops.

The three proposed water developments would be dispersed and occured in the south, east, and central portions of the WSA. Each water development would occupy a 25-square-foot area and include a water storage tank and trough. Surface disturbance would be minimal and the above ground facilities would be painted to blend with the surrounding landscape to reduce visual contrasts. The water developments would be visible from up to 500 feet and would each impair the perception of naturalness on up to 20 acres. The slight impacts to naturalness would be highly localized.

Development of the transmission line corridor along the west boundary of the WSA would impair the perception of naturalness within approximately a 2,500-acre viewshed along the corridor. Potential construction of 6 miles of transmission line would result in physical ground disturbance of less than 250 square feet per tower location which would occur every 800 to 1,200 feet along the alignment. Access road construction would be limited to short segments totaling less than 1 mile as primary access would be provided along the existing powerline service road adjacent to the WSA boundary. Moderate impacts to naturalness would occur as a result of visual contrasts of steel towers with the surrounding low shrub landscape. The impacts of construction of multiple towers and powerlines within the

corridor in the future would result in an increased visual dominance of transmission lines on the area's naturalness particularly in conjunction with the existing and proposed powerlines within the right-of-way that parallels the WSA.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use dispersed throughout the WSA on approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to detract from the sense of solitude within the WSA. The existing 300 visitor days of vehicle use related to recreation activities is projected to increase to a total of 500 visitor days. This increase would continue to maintain a low level of use and would not significantly affect solitude due to the expansiveness of the landscape and dispersed patterns of use. Overall, impacts to solitude would be minor as a result of projected motorized recreation use.

Mining activity associated with quarrying decorative building stone would disrupt solitude as a result of cutting the raw material from the rock outcrops as well as shaping, sizing, and polishing the finished blocks of stone. The noise associated with the mining operation would be audible within an area of approximately 600 acres surrounding the activity. There would be a moderate impact on solitude within the southeast portion of the WSA as a result of mining decorative building stone.

Development of the three water developments for livestock use that would be located in the south, east, and central portions of the WSA would result in localized short-term disruptions of solitude during actual construction as well as inspection and maintenance. Initial construction would occur over a 5-day period for each project requiring vehicle use to deliver materials. Inspection and maintenance would be done on a 3-year cycle with one vehicle trip required for each project. Overall, the impacts to solitude would be minor during construction activities, and negligible for inspection and maintenance which would require very infrequent vehicle access as would maintenance of the existing reservoir occurring on a 10-year cycle.

Continued sheepherding activities would result in vehicle use including trucks, trailers, and water trucks for 7 days per year during the months of May and June. Vehicle use would occur along the livestock driveway that parallels the northeast boundary of the WSA. Solitude would be adversely impacted within the vicinity of the livestock driveway when sheepherding activities are occurring. This would amount to short-term minor impacts on solitude over the 7 days of use.

Development of potential high voltage transmission lines within the utility corridor along the 6 miles of the WSA's western boundary would result in short-term moderate impacts to solitude. Construction activities would disrupt the sense of solitude within 2,500 acres along the corridor.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Continued motorized recreation use including projected increased use would limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation throughout the WSA in the vicinity of the 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Mining

of decorative building stone would diminish opportunities within the 5-acre quarry site which would not result in any perceptible impacts overall within the WSA. The attractiveness of hiking and horseback riding would be diminished by the presence of the developed transmission line corridor within the 2,500-acre viewshed along the 6-mile corridor.

Special Features

The habitat utilized by reintroduced pronghorn antelope in the northern portion of the WSA would not be affected by any of the management actions except for minor disruptions of use during periods of construction of powerlines within the transmission line corridor. Continued motorized recreation use and livestock grazing operations would not impact the pronghorn antelope habitat due to the low levels of use.

Conclusion:

The primary impacts on wilderness values would originate from mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA and development of the 6 miles of transmission line corridor along the western boundary. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over 2,960 acres with a direct loss of naturalness on 5 acres. Solitude within the WSA would be diminished within an area of 600 acres as a result of mining activities with additional short-term disruptions within a 2,500-acre area along the transmission line corridor during powerline construction activities. Projected motorized recreation use and livestock grazing activities would result in slight to minor impacts to wilderness values. Habitat for pronghorn antelope would not be noticeably impacted. Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities would be slightly impacted on a localized basis as a result of continued motorized recreation use, development of the 6 miles of transmission line corridor, and the 5-acre quarry for decorative building stone. There would be no adverse impacts on the pronghorn antelope habitat.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action, motorized recreation use would continue as prescribed in the Benton-Owens Valley MFP which designates the area as limited to existing or designated routes and trails. Approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes would remain open for use. The existing 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use would slowly increase to a total of 500 visitor days.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use which is anticipated to increase slowly from the existing 300 visitor days to a total of 500 visitor days.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Under the Proposed Action, the entire one-half-mile width of the transmission line corridor that runs along 6 miles of the WSA's west boundary, including the one-quarter width that extends into the WSA would be available for use. There are current plans to develop a transmission line

through this corridor. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes the corridor to accommodate multiple transmission line needs. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 6 miles of the west boundary.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Development of a mining operation for Bishop tuff in the southeast portion of the WSA would occur, requiring 1 mile of access road and a 5-acre quarry. There would be no impacts on the mining of decorative building stone within the WSA as the entire WSA would be open to all forms of mineral entry including mineral sales.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on the mining of decorative building stone. Mineral sales would be permitted. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff is projected for the WSA.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

Mining activities associated with the mining of decorative building stone and the construction of potential high voltage transmission lines would result in unavoidable adverse impacts as a result of surface disturbance. Continued motorized recreation use on 15 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and the construction of three water developments to support existing livestock grazing use would not result in any significant adverse impact.

Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Volcanic Tableland WSA, the ongoing uses include motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, sightseeing, and livestock grazing. Under the Proposed Action projected mining activities in the southeast portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 5 acres. Construction of transmission lines within the 6-mile-long utility corridor along the western boundary of the WSA would result in minor impacts to long-term productivity and would limit development options within the corridor. For the remainder of the WSA, future development options would remain open. Development of livestock grazing projects and projected motorized recreation use would not likely impact long-term productivity.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Mining activity for decorative building stone would result in an irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness values on 5 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the Bishop tuff. Transmission line development would not likely lead to any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources within the utility corridor. Throughout the remainder of the WSA, no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are projected.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

11,840 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 11,840 acres of the Volcanic Tableland WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the protection of wilderness values as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, wilderness values within the 11,840-acre Volcanic Tableland WSA would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and pronghorn antelope habitat would be retained. Motorized recreation use, mining of decorative building stone, and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA would be prohibited benefiting wilderness values.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of the closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. Approximately 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motorized recreation use eliminating 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use annually. While these primitive vehicle routes would slowly begin to naturally revegetate with the surrounding low shrubs and annual plants, projected hiking and horseback riding use of 200 visitor days would maintain the appearance of a trail within these existing routes.

Projected mining activity for decorative building stone would be precluded as naturalness would be retained within the 5-acre quarry site and the perception of naturalness within a 400-acre viewshed would remain unchanged.

As described under the Proposed Action the three proposed livestock water developments would result in highly localized, slight impacts to naturalness. Approximately 25 square feet of surface area would be disturbed for each project with the perception of naturalness being impaired on up to 20 acres surrounding each project.

Consequences

Development of powerlines within the portion of the transmission line corridor inside the WSA would be precluded. Naturalness would be enhanced within the 2,500-acre viewshed along the west boundary of the WSA by not contributing to the visual impacts of the powerlines within the adjacent transmission line corridor.

Solitude

The prohibition of motorized recreation use within the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to solitude. Due to the low level of vehicle use (300 visitor days) which is confined to 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes, solitude would only be slightly enhanced.

Mining activities associated with quarrying decorative building stone would be prohibited. The sense of solitude would be retained within the project area and surrounding 600 acres that would have been impacted under the Proposed Action as a result of the anticipated mining activities.

Development of the three water developments would occur as described under the Proposed Action resulting in short-term localized minor impacts. Additionally, inspection and maintenance of the three proposed water projects and the existing reservoir would be infrequent resulting in the same negligible impacts as described under the Proposed Action.

Development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the 6 miles of the WSA's western boundary would be precluded with no construction activities to impact solitude. Solitude would generally be retained along the western boundary of the WSA in the vicinity of the transmission line corridor.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained throughout the WSA. Eliminating 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor would enhance primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities in the WSA.

Special Features

Habitat in the northern portion of the WSA would be retained for the reintroduced pronghorn antelope that utilize the WSA. By eliminating motorized recreation use as well as prohibiting development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA, this habitat would be slightly enhanced.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by eliminating motorized vehicle use (300 visitor days) as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone and development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the western boundary. Proposed livestock projects would result in slight to minor, localized impacts to wilderness values. Habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope would be slightly enhanced.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation would result in closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. The entire 11,840 acres of the WSA including 15 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed eliminating approximately 300 visitor days of motorized recreation. These users would most likely relocate to other public lands outside the WSA. Due to the low level of use occurring within the WSA, and the availability of opportunities outside the WSA, there would only be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 300 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. Due to the projected low level of use within the WSA and the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA, there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Wilderness designation would preclude use of the one-quarter-mile width of the utility corridor that extends into the WSA along 6 miles of the west boundary. The remaining one-quarter-mile width of the one-half-mile-wide corridor lies outside the WSA and would be available for development of a transmission line. While this may limit flexibility in planning the alignment of future transmission lines, it would not preclude development. There is currently a proposal to develop a transmission line through this corridor outside the WSA. There would be a minor impact due to the constrained width of the utility corridor available for development. Multiple transmission line development would be moderately impacted due to the limited opportunities available within the remaining portion of the corridor to accommodate additional transmission lines. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter-mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use. However, the available corridor width outside the WSA would limit the opportunity for multiple transmission line development which could lead to moderate adverse impacts on the development of the transmission line corridor.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

All forms of mineral entry including mineral sales would be prohibited in the 11,840-acre WSA under the All Wilderness Alterative. Development of a 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. Bishop tuff is currently in high demand and is available in areas outside the WSA. Therefore, the result would only be a minor impact on the mining of decorative building stone.

Consequences

Conclusion:

Mining of decorative building stone, including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited. There would be only a minor impact as Bishop tuff is available in areas outside the WSA.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

10,920 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
920 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative 10,920 acres within the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 920 acres constitutes the one-quarter-mile-wide portion of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the 6-mile western boundary. This alternative is essentially the same as the All Wilderness Alternative including the same management actions with the exception of precluding the transmission line corridor from wilderness designation and permitting the development of powerlines within this corridor.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the beneficial effects on wilderness values as a result of precluding motorized recreation use and mining activities for decorative building stone. However, development of the transmission line corridor in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would result in impacts on the WSA's wilderness values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, wilderness values within 10,920 acres of the WSA, which amounts to over 92% of the WSA, would be protected legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope would be retained. Motorized recreation use and mining of decorative building stone would be prohibited benefiting wilderness values.

The remaining 920 acres within the WSA would not receive any of the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. The nondesignated portion of the WSA is the transmission line corridor which would be developed resulting in impacts on the WSA's wilderness values.

Naturalness

Motorized recreation use and mining of decorative building stone would be prohibited, within 10,920 acres of the WSA designated as wilderness, resulting in a slight positive benefit to naturalness which would be retained as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. There would be no motorized recreation use or mining activities anticipated within the remaining 920 acres of the WSA resulting in naturalness being retained and slightly enhanced.

The three proposed livestock water developments would occur within the portion of the WSA designated as wilderness. There would be highly localized, slight impacts to naturalness as described under the Proposed Action. For each water development, approximately 25 square feet of surface area would be disturbed with the perception of naturalness impaired on up to 20 acres surrounding each project.

Development of the transmission line corridor along the west boundary of the WSA would occur within the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Construction of powerlines within this 6-mile-long corridor, as described under the Proposed Action would impair the perception of naturalness within approximately a 2,500-acre viewshed. There would be a moderate impact to naturalness as a result of the visual contrast of multiple towers and powerlines within the surrounding low shrub landscape.

Solitude

The prohibition of motorized recreation use and projected mining activities for decorative building stone within the 10,920 acres of designated portion of the WSA would retain solitude and result in a slight positive benefit as described under the All Wilderness Alternative. Within the remaining 920 acres not designated wilderness, no motorized recreation use or mining activities are projected that would diminish solitude.

The three proposed livestock water development projects and the existing reservoir are within the designated portion of the WSA and would result in the same negligible impacts described under the Proposed Action.

Development of the transmission line corridor within the portion of the WSA not designated wilderness would result in the same short-term moderate impacts to solitude as described under the Proposed Action.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained within the 10,920 acres designated as wilderness. Eliminating 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding mining for decorative building stone would enhance primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. Construction of the 1 mile of livestock fence in the southern tip of the WSA would result in only negligible impacts, if any, on primitive and unconfined recreation.

Within the 920 acres not designated as wilderness, development of high voltage transmission lines would limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The attractiveness of hiking and horseback riding would be diminished by the presence of the transmission line corridor within the 2,500-acre viewshed along the 6-mile corridor on the western boundary of the WSA.

Special Features

The habitat utilized by reintroduced pronghorn antelope in the northern portion of the WSA would be retained except for minor disruptions of use during periods of construction of powerlines within the transmission line

corridor located in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. By eliminating motorized recreation use within the 10,920 acres in the WSA designated as wilderness this habitat would be slightly enhanced.

Conclusion

Wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced within the 10,920 acres of the WSA designated as wilderness. Motorized recreation use and mining activities for decorative building stone would be eliminated, benefiting wilderness values. Proposed livestock projects would result in slight to minor localized impacts to wilderness values.

Within the 920 acres designated as wilderness, development of the transmission line corridor along the western boundary of the WSA would impair the perception of naturalness over a 2,500-acre area with additional short-term disruptions to solitude as a result of construction activities.

Habitat for reintroduced pronghorn antelope would be slightly enhanced except for minor disruptions of use as a result of construction activities within the transmission line corridor.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would have the same impacts on motorized recreation use as the All Wilderness Alternative. The only difference between the two alternatives is the exclusion of the 920-acre utility corridor along 6 miles of the western boundary of the WSA. Vehicle use would cease on the one-quarter mile of existing vehicle route within the nondesignated area since it leads to a route system within the designated portion which would be closed and provides no other destination or appeal to motorized recreation users. Therefore, the impacts on motorized recreation use would be the same as under the All Wilderness Alternative. There would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use with 300 visitor days eliminated as a result of wilderness designation.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 350 visitor days would be foregone within the designated portion of the WSA which amounts to over 93% of the WSA. No motorized recreation use is anticipated on the one-quarter mile of existing primitive vehicle route within the remainder of the WSA not designated wilderness. Overall there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Transmission Line Development

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, the entire one-half-mile width of the utility line corridor that runs along 6 miles of the west boundary of the WSA would be available for use. The portion of the WSA not designated wilderness includes the one-quarter-mile width of the corridor that lies within the WSA. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes the corridor to accommodate multiple transmission line needs. There are current plans to develop a transmission line through this corridor. There has been

considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use. There would be no impact on development of this transmission line corridor.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width of the corridor within the WSA along 6 miles of the west boundary would be in the portion not designated as wilderness.

Impacts on Mining of Decorative Building Stone

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 10,920 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would be closed to mineral sales including decorative building stone. A 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff would be prohibited Bishop tuff is currently in high demand and is available outside the WSA. Therefore, the result would only be a minor impact on the mining of decorative building stone.

Within the 920 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, mineral sales including decorative building stone would be permitted. However, no sources of Bishop tuff have been identified within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA and no development is anticipated. Since the nondesignated area would be open to mineral sale there would be no impact in this portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on mining of decorative building stone within the 10,920 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral sales including a projected 5-acre quarry for Bishop tuff.

Within the 920 acres not designated wilderness mineral sales would be permitted. However, no mining of decorative building stone is anticipated. There would be no impact.

CASA DIABLO WSA
(CA-010-082)

PROPOSED ACTION (No Wilderness/No Action)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
9,167 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, none of the 9,167 acres within the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the impacts on wilderness values as a result of projected mining activities, development of a transmission line corridor and continued motorized recreation use.

Consequences

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values on the 9,167 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and crucial mule deer winter habitat as a special feature of the WSA. Impacts on wilderness values would result from continued motorized recreation use, underground silver mining activities, and development of utility corridor high voltage transmission lines.

Naturalness

Continued motorized recreation use within the 9,167-acre Casa Diablo WSA would maintain approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes in an unnatural condition. The vehicle routes within the WSA would remain substantially unnoticeable with the continued use level of 300 visitor days per year remaining stable. Since motorized vehicle use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails, the impacts to naturalness from continued motorized recreation use would remain slight. The perception of naturalness would only be locally impaired as vegetative and topographic screening would confine potential adverse impacts.

As a result of the high potential for metallic minerals on Casa Diablo Mountain, it is anticipated that an underground silver mine would be developed on the east slope of Casa Diablo Mountain near the BLM and Forest Service boundary in the central portion of the WSA. Naturalness would be lost on 120 acres as a result of related mining activity in the vicinity of 32 existing mining claims where mining activities have occurred in the past. The perception of naturalness would be impaired within a 700-acre viewshed surrounding the mining facilities including a millsite, waste rock disposal area, and tailings. Additionally, 8 miles of access roads would be constructed, further diminishing the perception of naturalness within the 700-acre viewshed.

Development of the utility corridor along 5 miles of the eastern boundary of the WSA would impair the perception of naturalness within a 1,700-acre viewshed along the corridor. Physical ground disturbance would be limited to the tower locations resulting in less than 250 square feet of surface disturbance per site which would occur every 800 to 1,200 feet along the alignment. Access road construction would be less than 1 mile since there is an existing service road for the powerline outside the WSA. The primary impacts would occur as a result of the visual contrast of the steel towers within the surrounding low shrub landscape. The impacts of construction of future towers and powerlines on the area's naturalness would result in an increased visual dominance of transmission lines, particularly in conjunction with the existing powerlines within the right-of-way that parallels the WSA.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to detract from the feeling of solitude particularly in the western portion of the WSA around Casa Diablo Mountain. However, the low level of use (300 visitor days) would result in only minor impacts within the vicinity of the existing primitive vehicle routes. There are no increases projected that would result in additional impacts to solitude over the existing level.

Mining activities associated with the anticipated development and operation of an underground silver mine would adversely impact a visitor's opportunity for solitude within an area of 700 acres surrounding the mine. This would result in a minor impact on solitude in the northern portion of the WSA east of Casa Diablo Mountain.

Sheepherders' continued use of vehicles would result in negligible short-term impacts on solitude. This use occurs primarily in May and amounts to 5 days of vehicle use including trucks, trailers, and water trucks to herd sheep primarily in the southeastern portion of the WSA.

Development of potential high voltage transmission lines within the utility corridor along 5 miles of the eastern boundary of the WSA would result in a short-term adverse impact to solitude. Construction activities would disrupt the sense of solitude within a 1,700-acre area along the corridor's 5-mile length in the WSA.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Mineral development east of Casa Diablo Mountain in the northern portion of the WSA would diminish opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation on 120 acres as a result of mining activity. Continued motorized recreation use (300 visitor days) would limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation particularly in the western portion of the WSA near Casa Diablo Mountain. The attractiveness of hiking and horseback riding would be diminished by the presence of the transmission lines within the 1,700-acre viewshed along the 5-mile corridor on the east boundary of the WSA.

Special Features

Crucial deer winter habitat, as a special feature of the WSA would be slightly impacted by mining activity in the northern portion of the WSA. Approximately 120 acres of this habitat would be lost due to development of the mining facilities. The loss of this habitat would result in negligible localized impacts. Other activities within the WSA including the continued low level of motorized recreation use as well as the short-term construction activities associated with development of transmission lines within the utility corridor would not result in a loss of habitat and most likely would not coincide with the deer's winter use of the habitat.

Conclusion:

The primary impacts on wilderness values would originate from mining activities near Casa Diablo Mountain resulting in a loss of naturalness on 120 acres. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over 2,400 acres as a result of the mining activities and development of the utility corridor for high voltage transmission lines along the eastern border. Solitude would be diminished within a 700-acre area surrounding the mining activity. Construction of transmission lines would result in short-term impacts to solitude along the 5-mile utility corridor. Continued motorized recreation use (300 visitor days) on 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would maintain slight impacts to naturalness and solitude. Crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost on 120 acres as a result of mining activity.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action, motorized recreation use would continue on existing routes and trails. Approximately 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would remain open for use which is primarily hunting and sightseeing. The existing 300 visitor days would remain stable with no increases anticipated.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which is projected to remain stable at the current 300 visitor days.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Under the Proposed Action, the entire one-half-mile width of the transmission line corridor that runs along 5 miles of the WSA's east boundary, including the one-quarter-mile width that extends into the WSA, would be available for use. There are current plans to develop a transmission line through this corridor, within the existing right-of-way outside the WSA. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribes the corridor to accommodate future use. There has been considerable interest in the corridor, demonstrating a high demand for potential additional use.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of the one-half-mile-wide transmission line corridor. The one-quarter-mile width within the WSA would be available for use along 5 miles of the east boundary.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

Mining activities associated with the underground silver mine and construction of potential high voltage transmission lines would result in unavoidable adverse impacts as a result of surface disturbance. Additionally, mining activities would unavoidably result in a loss of 120 acres of crucial mule deer habitat. Continued motorized recreation use would not result in any significant adverse impacts since use is projected to remain stable with use limited to 8 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes.

Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Casa Diablo WSA the ongoing uses include motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, livestock grazing, and wildlife management. Under the Proposed Action, projected mining activities east of Casa Diablo Mountain would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 120 acres. Development of transmission lines within the 5-mile-long utility corridor along the east boundary of the WSA would result in minor impacts to long-term productivity and would limit future development options within the corridor. For the remainder of the WSA, future development options would remain open. Continued levels of motorizied recreation use and livestock grazing would not likely impact long-term productivity.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Mining activity would result in an irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness values on 120 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the mineral resource. Transmission line development would not likely lead to any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources within the utility corridor. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are projected.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,167 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 9,167 acres of the Casa Diablo WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the beneficial impacts on wilderness values, as well as the effects of mineral development as a result of valid existing rights and the prohibition of development within an identified transmission line corridor.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, wilderness values within the 9,167-acre Casa Diablo WSA would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and crucial mule deer habitat would be retained. However, mineral development would continued due to the anticipated determination of valid existing rights resulting in impacts to wilderness values. Motorized recreation use and development within the identified transmission line corridor would be prohibited benefiting wilderness values.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of the closure of the area to motorized recreation use. Eight miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 800 visitor days of motorized recreation

Consequences

use would be eliminated. The closed primitive vehicle routes would be used as hiking and equestrian trails maintaining the appearance of a trial rather than a vehicle route.

Projected underground mining activities described under the Proposed Action are anticipated to continue under wilderness designation as a result of the projected determination of valid existing rights. The impacts would be the same as those identified under the Proposed Action including the loss of naturalness on 120 acres and the impairment of the perception of naturalness within a 700-acre viewshed.

Development of the utility corridor within the WSA along 5 miles of the east boundary would be precluded. The perception of naturalness would be retained within the 1,700-acre viewshed.

Solitude

The prohibition of motorized vehicle use within the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to solitude. Due to the low level of use (300 visitor day) which is confined to the existing 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes solitude would only be slightly enhanced.

Mining activities associated with the underground silver mine would continue as described under the Proposed Action. Solitude would be adversely affected within a 700-acre area resulting in minor impacts.

There would be a negligible benefit to solitude as the existing vehicle use for sheepherding would be accommodated outside the WSA along the east boundary of the WSA utilizing the powerline service road.

Development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA would be precluded with no construction activities to impact solitude. Solitude would generally be retained in the eastern portion of the WSA along the corridor.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained and enhanced throughout most of the WSA as a result of eliminating 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use as well as precluding development of the utility corridor along the eastern boundary. Mining activity would continue to diminish opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Special Features

Mining activities would continue to impact crucial mule deer winter habitat in the northern portion of the WSA as described under the Proposed Action. Precluding development of the transmission line corridor and motorized recreation use would slightly enhance crucial mule deer winter habitat by eliminating potential conflicts in use.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by precluding development of the transmission line corridor within the WSA along the east boundary and eliminating 300 visitor days of motorized recreation use. The high probability of valid existing rights determination for existing mining claims near Casa Diablo Mountain would lead to development of an underground silver mine. Mining activity would result in a loss of naturalness on 120 acres and an impairment of the perception of naturalness as well as the sense of solitude within a 700-acre viewshed. Crucial mule deer winter habitat would be lost on 120 acres as a result of mining activity.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation would result in closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. The entire 9,167 acres of the WSA including 8 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed eliminating approximately 300 visitor days of motorized recreation. These users would most likely relocate to other BLM public lands and U.S. Forest Service lands outside the WSA which offer similar opportunities for hunting and sightseeing. Due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA, there would only be a minor impact on motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would be prohibited and 300 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. There would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use due to the low level of use displaced from the WSA and the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA.

Impacts on Transmission Line Corridor Development

Wilderness designation would preclude use of the one-quarter-mile width of the utility corridor that extends into the WSA along 5 miles of the east boundary. The remaining one-quarter-mile width of the one-half-mile-wide corridor lies outside the WSA and would be available for development of a transmission line. While this may limit flexibility in planning the alignment of a transmission line, it would not preclude development. There would be a minor impact due to the constrained width of the utility corridor available for development. Additionally, the current proposal for upgrading the existing right-of-way outside the WSA would not be affected by wilderness designation. Should the Fish Slough WSA to the east of Casa Diablo also be designated wilderness, the only route available between the WSAs would be within the existing right-of-way with a developed transmission line. This existing right-of-way is already planned to accommodate a proposed transmission line. Any additional transmission lines would result in potential moderate adverse impacts around the Casa Diablo WSA. This would result in potential moderate adverse impacts in the future development of the transmission line corridor.

Conclusion:

There would be a minor impact on development of the transmission line corridor. Wilderness designation would preclude use of one-quarter mile of the one-half-mile-wide corridor. The remaining one-quarter-mile width is outside the WSA and would be available for use. Should the Fish Slough WSA also be designated wilderness, there would be a potential moderate impact to the future development of the transmission line corridor, since this 2¼ miles of the corridor would be entirely within areas designated as wilderness.

EXCELSIOR WSA
(CA-010-088)

PROPOSED ACTION (No Wilderness/No Action)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
9,100 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, none of the 9,100 acres within the Excelsior WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the effects of geothermal exploration and development as well as continued motorized recreation use on the WSA's wilderness values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and none of the wilderness values in the 9,100 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and pronghorn antelope habitat considered as a special feature of the WSA. Impacts to wilderness values would include continued motorized recreation use which is low and not anticipated to increase and projected geothermal exploration and development.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would maintain those routes in an unnatural condition without vegetation. The overall low motorized recreation use (100 visitor days annually) and the limited amount of vehicle routes on which vehicle use is designated, restrict the impairment of naturalness.

Naturalness would be slightly altered in the north-central portion of the WSA by a proposed plastic rain collection storage basin that would benefit pronghorn antelope and other wildlife species. Surface disturbance would be limited to an area approximately 40 feet by 40 feet. The low profile of the rain collection storage basin and the small amount of surface disturbance would result in very localized, negligible impacts.

Geothermal exploration and development in the western portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 40 acres due to surface disturbance related to a 10-Mw geothermal power plant and associated well pads, pipelines, and powerlines. Additionally 5 miles of road construction would also result in a loss of naturalness. Due to the open nature of the vegetation and the gently sloping topography, the perception of naturalness would be impaired over an area up to 2,000 acres from which the facilities would be visible.

Construction of the proposed livestock water development in the central portion of the WSA would disturb a surface area of up to 100 square feet. The windmill would be 30 feet high and observable from a radial distance of up to one-third mile. Impacts to naturalness would be slight and for the most part localized.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on the 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would distract from the feeling of solitude in the vicinity of these routes located through the central and eastern portions of the WSA. Overall, the low level of motorized recreation use (100 visitor days) would have negligible impacts on solitude.

Construction of the plastic rain collection storage basin for wildlife would require the use of a truck to transport materials to the project site. Installation would occur over a 2-day period. Yearly maintenance would require one vehicle trip. Impacts to solitude would be negligible.

Activities associated with the projected geothermal power plant would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude. Construction and ongoing operations of the 10-Mw facility would diminish the visitor's sense of seculsion and isolation within an area of up to 2,000 acres surrounding the facilities as a result of the open vegetation and lack of topographic screening.

Development of the livestock water project would require the use of motorized vehicles and equipment. Approximately 15 vehicle trips during the 10-day project period would have slight localized impacts on solitude. Yearly inspection and maintenance would result in three vehicle trips per year having a negligible short-term impact on solitude for those visitors along the existing primitive vehicle route.

Vehicle use and human activity related to casual fuelwood harvesting would have slight impacts on solitude. The low use (20 vehicle trips per year) and low availability of fuelwood (40 cords per year) would locally disrupt solitude in the northern portion of the WSA where 880 acres of juniper would be accessible for fuelwood harvest. Chainsaw activity would be audible during fuelwood cutting.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited on 40 acres as a result of geothermal development in the western portion of the WSA. There would be a slight impact on opportunities for primitive

and unconfined recreation since geothermal activity would affect only a small area in the western portion of the WSA. Continued low levels of vehicle use on 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes would have a negligible impact on primitive and unconfined recreation.

Special Features

The pronghorn antelope habitat would be slightly impacted as a result of geothermal activity on 40 acres in the western portion of the WSA. However, development of a rain collection storage basin in the north-central portion of the WSA would have a positive benefit by providing a greater supply of water for wildlife including pronghorn antelope as would the water development for livestock in the central portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

On an overall basis there would be a minor impact on wilderness values within the 9,100-acre Excelsior WSA. Impacts in the western portion of the WSA from geothermal development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 40 acres and impair the perception of naturalness on up to 2,000 acres. Continued low levels of motorized recreation use, fuelwood harvesting and construction and maintenance of the livestock water development and the wildlife rain collection storage basin would result in negligible to minor local impacts. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited in the WSA as a result of geothermal development and continued motorized recreation use. The pronghorn antelope habitat, as a special feature of the WSA, would be limited on 40 acres due to geothermal development, however, it would benefit from the rain collection storage basin and the livestock water development.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action, motorized recreation use would continue within the WSA as prescribed in the Bodie-Coleville MFP. Vehicle use is designated as limited to the existing 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Motorized recreation use is not anticipated to increase noticeably, if at all, and would remain at approximately 100 visitor days per year.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which would remain at approximately the current annual level of 100 visitor days.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Under the Proposed Action all 9,100 acres within the WSA would be available for geothermal exploration and development. It is anticipated that exploration for geothermal resources would occur in the central portion of the WSA and that development of a 10-Mw resource resulting in 5 miles of roads and 40 acres would subsequently follow.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on geothermal exploration and development in the WSA.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot be Avoided

Geothermal development on 40 acres would lead to unavoidable adverse impacts to wilderness values including pronghorn antelope habitat as a result of surface-disturbing activities. Preplanning and the establishment of mitigation measures prior to surface-disturbing activities will minimize the potential for adverse impacts. Development of a rain collection storage basin for wildlife and a water development including a windmill for livestock would result in very minor impacts offset by their positive benefits to wilderness values including pronghorn antelope habitat as a special feature of the WSA.

Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

Under the Proposed Action, the WSA would not be designated wilderness and all current and projected short-term uses would continue. However, geothermal resource development is the only activity that would result in a loss of long-term productivity on 40 acres in the western portion of the WSA. The long-term productivity of the remainder of the WSA would be maintained and not significantly affected by continued motorized recreation use and the water development for livestock. Development of a rain collection storage basin will contribute to the long-term productivity of wildlife particularly pronghorn antelope in the WSA.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

The only irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources within the WSA is the projected development of a potential low temperature 10-Mw geothermal resources. Naturalness would be irreversibly and irretrievably committed to development of production facilities for geothermal development. No other activities are projected that would result in any anticipated irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,100 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative the entire 9,100 acres of the Excelsior WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

Impact on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 9,100 acres of the Excelsior WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and all wilderness values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features would be retained.

Consequences

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness due to the closure of the area to motorized recreation use which is approximately 100 visitor days foregone. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to vehicles and used as hiking and equestrian trails.

As in the Proposed Action, the proposed wildlife project consisting of a rain collection storage basin for pronghorn antelope and other wildlife would be constructed resulting in the same localized, slight impacts as those identified under the Proposed Action.

The exclusion of projected geothermal development in the WSA would benefit naturalness in the WSA. Naturalness would be retained on 40 acres as a result of precluding geothermal activities and surface disturbance associated with well pads, pipelines, powerlines, roads, and a 10-Mw power plant. The broad visual impacts and impairment of the perception of naturalness projected for an area of up to 2,000 acres would not occur.

As in the Proposed Action the proposed livestock water development including a windmill would be constructed resulting in the same localized slight impacts as presented in the Proposed Action.

A slight positive benefit to naturalness would occur as fuelwood harvesting would be prohibited in the WSA. Naturalness would be retained within the 880-acre area in the northern portion of the WSA in which fuelwood cutting of a projected 40 cords would be precluded.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the WSA to motorized recreation use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (100 visitor days) which is limited to the 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes solitude would be enhanced only slightly.

Impacts to solitude associated with vehicle use for construction and maintenance of both the proposed rain collection storage basin and livestock water development would be the same localized impacts described under the Proposed Action.

The proposed geothermal development of a low temperature 10-Mw geothermal resource would be prohibited with solitude being retained within the 2,000 acres that would have been affected by construction and operations activity.

Prohibition of fuelwood harvesting within the WSA would eliminate human activity with associated vehicle use (20 visitor days per year), and chainsaw noise, slightly retaining and enhancing solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the WSA to motorized recreational use would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the WSA.

The prohibition of geothermal exploration and development would enhance primitive and unconfined types of recreation on the 40 acres of public land that would remain undeveloped within the 40-acre area in the north-central portion of the WSA.

Special Features

Habitat for the pronghorn antelope would preclude projected geothermal development. Approximately 40 acres of habitat would be retained and remain undeveloped.

Conclusion:

Overall the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would result in a slight to minor enhancement of the long-term protection of wilderness values. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use, prohibition of geothermal exploration and eliminating fuelwood harvesting would result in minor benefits to wilderness values. Proposed wildlife improvements including maintenance would have slight adverse impacts to localized naturalness and solitude. There would be a slight benefit to the WSA's pronghorn antelope habitat.

Impacts on Motorized Recreational Use

Wilderness designation would result in closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. The entire 9,100 acres of the WSA including 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would be closed, eliminating approximately 100 visitor days. These users would most likely relocate to other areas outside the WSA that offer similar opportunities for sightseeing and hunting. However, such opportunities are somewhat limited. Due to the low level of use there would be only slight impacts on motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use totaling 100 visitor days would be foregone within the WSA. While opportunities outside the WSA for motorized recreation use are somewhat limited, the low level of use being displaced from the WSA would be accommodated. There would be slight impacts on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation of the entire 9,100 acres would preclude geothermal exploration and development in the WSA. Based on a low to moderate potential, a projected 10-Mw geothermal resource in the central portion of the WSA would be foregone. The only active geothermal exploration and development is approximately 30 miles south of the WSA in the Long Valley caldera. Current statewide energy projections by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) indicate use of existing facilities and sources including identified projects exceeds projected electric power demands through the year 1996.

Consequences

Therefore, precluding geothermal exploration and development is not considered a quantifiable adverse impact at this time. However, precluding development within the KGRA portion of the WSA over the long term would result in a less than minor impact.

Conclusion:

Exploration and development of a projected 50-Mw geothermal resource would be foregone. Over the long term, this would result in a less than minor impact.

GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA
(CA-010-090)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
54,941 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action none of the 54,941 acres within the Granite Mountains WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to impacts on wilderness values as a result of mineral and geothermal development, continued motorized recreation use, and planned vegetative manipulations to increase forage for livestock grazing.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be designated wilderness and none of the wilderness values within the 54,941 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including deer migration corridors, raptor nesting areas, a sensitive plant species (Eriogonum ampullaceum and cultural resource values. Impacts to wilderness values would result from continued motorized recreation use, projected mineral and geothermal development, and planned livestock grazing improvements.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes would maintain these routes in an unnatural condition either without vegetation or as "two-tracks." Due to the dispersed nature of the projected motorized recreation use (1,100 visitor days) and since use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails the perception of naturalness would be impaired only within the immediate vicinity of these routes. Variations in terrain and vegetation would further limit these impacts except in the Cowtrack Spring area where a wildfire burned 2,140 acres in 1984. This burned area remains accessible and vulnerable to impacts from indiscriminate ORV use until rehabilitation efforts have reestablished vegetation within the charred and blackened landscape.

As a result of the moderate potential for the occurrence of gold in the western portion of the WSA, it is anticipated that an open-pit mining operation for disseminated gold would be developed. Naturalness would be lost on 145 acres as a result of surface disturbance including the open-pit, waste rock disposal area, tailings, and millsite facilities. The perception of naturalness would be impaired within a viewshed of 2,500 acres surrounding the mine site as a result of mining activities and the development of 5 miles of exploration and development roads. Mineral development would result in moderate localized impacts to naturalness within the western portion of the WSA.

Projected geothermal exploration and development would occur in the northwest portion of the WSA near Warm Springs. It is anticipated that exploration would lead to development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource including drill pads, well pads, and production facilities including pipelines and a power plant. Approximately 80 acres of surface disturbance would occur, resulting in a loss of naturalness. Due to the lack of vegetation and topographic screening in this portion of the WSA the perception of naturalness would be impaired within approximately a 5,000-acre viewshed as a result of the geothermal development including construction of 12 miles of roads.

Livestock grazing improvements planned for the WSA include 8,000 acres of planned vegetation manipulations as well as six water developments and two pipelines. Five prescribed burns ranging in size from 800 to 1,500 acres and totaling 5,500 acres would occur over a period of 5 years. The burns would temporarily impair the perception of naturalness within the central and southern portions of the WSA as a result of the charred and blackened appearance of the landscape. In the southeast portion of the WSA chemical treatments to a 500-acre area and a 2,000-acre area over a 2-year period would temporarily impair the perception of naturalness as a result of the presence of dead vegetation, primarily sagebrush and other low shrubs. Within the 8,000 acres of vegetative manipulations, vegetation, primarily grasses, would become established over two growing seasons reducing the impacts to naturalness. These adverse impacts would gradually diminish as the invading shrubs begin to blend with the surrounding landscape. Increased forage production would result in an additional 569 AUMs of livestock use for a total of 3,424 AUMs within the WSA. This increase would slightly impair naturalness. However, proposed water developments would improve livestock distribution and prevent degradation of naturalness that could result from overutilization.

A total of six water developments including a water storage tank and trough would be located in the southeast and west-central portions of the WSA. Each project would require 25 square feet of surface disturbance and installation of a trough and water storage tank. Surface disturbance would be minimal and the above-ground facilities would be painted to blend with the surrounding landscape to reduce visual contrasts. The water developments would be visible from up to 200 feet away partially screened by brush and topography. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over an area of less than 5 acres each. The slight impacts to naturalness would be highly localized within a total of 30 acres for all six water developments.

Consequences

The construction of two pipelines and water troughs in the southwest portion of the WSA would impair the perception of naturalness on a total of 10 acres. The pipelines, both extending from existing water tanks outside the WSA, would be buried and would have only short-term negligible impacts on naturalness.

Fuelwood harvesting of pinyon pine and juniper would have a negligible impact on naturalness within an area of approximately 1,100 acres in the east half of the WSA. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting of dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 50 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of the stumps and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Pinyon nut collection is expected to have no effect on naturalness since the nuts are collected from pine cones after the cones have fallen to the surface. The nuts are removed from the cones on site and the cones are randomly returned to the ground.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use dispersed throughout the WSA on approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes would continue to distract from the feeling of solitude within the vicinity of these existing routes. The existing 1,000 visitor days of vehicle use related to recreation activities is anticipated to increase to a total of 1,100 visitor days. This use would continue to maintain a low level of use and would not significantly affect solitude due to the large size of the WSA, varied nature of the landscape, and dispersed patterns of use. Solitude would be most impaired during the first weekend in June when 400 participants of the Sierra Safari motorcycle event use the existing routes for their annual poker rally. From an overall perspective, the projected 1,100 visitor days of motorized recreation use would have minor impacts on solitude within the 54,941 acres of the WSA.

Mining activities associated with the anticipated development and operation of a 145-acre open-pit gold mine would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude within 2,500 acres surrounding the mine. There would be localized impacts to solitude within the western portion of the WSA. However, the overall impacts to solitude within the entire WSA as a result of mining would be minor.

Development of a projected 50-Mw geothermal facility in the northwest portion of the WSA would adversely affect solitude. The construction and ongoing operations activities of geothermal resource production would diminish the visitor's sense of seclusion and isolation within approximately 5,000 acres due to the open character of the landscape in this portion of the WSA.

The five prescribed burns projected for the central and southern portion of the WSA would range in size from 800 to 1,500 acres and occur over a 5-year period. Solitude would be disrupted over a 2-day period for each burn as a result of burning and mop-up operations. Human activity associated with vehicle use and helicopter use as well as smoke would adversely affect solitude during this period. The chemical treatments of a 500-acre

area and a 2,000-acre area would occur over a 2-year period and utilize a helicopter for aerial application. The 500-acre treatment area would require helicopter use and two support vehicles to complete the aerial spraying for 1 day along the WSA boundary south of Granite Mountain. The following year the 2,000-acre spray area northeast of Granite Mountain would occur over a 4-day period requiring the use of a helicopter and two support vehicles utilizing existing vehicle routes. As a result of the vegetative treatments, both prescribed burning and chemical spraying, solitude would be disrupted resulting in short-term minor impacts.

Construction of the six proposed water developments in the southeast and west-central portions of the WSA would each require 5 days of vehicle use. Inspection and maintenance would result in one vehicle trip every 3 years for each project. Overall, the 30 days required for construction would result in localized short-term minor impacts to solitude in the vicinity of the six project sites and along the vehicle routes used for access. Inspection and maintenance would be infrequent with six vehicle trips every 5 years resulting in negligible impacts to solitude.

The two pipelines with water troughs in the southwest portion of the WSA would each require several vehicles over a 10-day period for construction. Inspection and maintenance of each project would annually require the use of a truck for 2 days. The 20 days of vehicle use required for construction of the two projects would result in localized, short-term minor impacts to solitude along the southwest boundary of the WSA. Annual inspection and maintenance would be infrequent and result in negligible impacts to solitude with a total of 4 days of vehicle use occurring each year.

Existing livestock operations that would continue to disrupt solitude include sheepherding and inspection and maintenance of 4 miles of fenceline in the northwest portion of the WSA and 2 miles of existing pipelines. These existing activities would result in short-term negligible impacts due to the infrequent nature of use.

Vehicle use and human activity associated with casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would have negligible impacts to solitude within the east half of the WSA. The low use and availability of fuelwood (25 vehicle trips per year within a 1,000-acre area) would have negligible impacts on solitude. Chainsaw activity would be audible during fuelwood cutting. The 20 vehicle trips projected for pinyon nut collection would have negligible impacts on solitude within the same area.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Projected mineral development related to an open-pit gold mine and development of a 50-Mw geothermal power facility would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation on a total of 225 acres in the west and northwest portions of the WSA. Continued motorized recreation use would diminish opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreational use along approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The 8,000 acres of vegetative treatments in the central, south, and southeast portions of the WSA would slightly enhance opportunities for primitive and

unconfined recreation by making this portion of the WSA more accessible for foot travel. Overall there would be minor impacts to primitive and unconfined recreation due to the opportunities offered by the complex and diverse features and size of the WSA as well as the scenic vistas both within the WSA and outside the WSA.

Special Features

Construction of a pipeline and water trough in the southwest portion of the WSA would cross the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade. The pipeline would be buried and would not result in any perceptible impacts along the railroad grade. Cultural resource values and areas with predicted high sensitivity are primarily located in portions of the WSA away from any projected development. However, cultural resource surface inventories would be required prior to any surface-disturbing activity to determine the presence of any cultural sites and the need for mitigation measures to either avoid sites or mitigate potential impacts. A protective research-oriented Cultural Resource Management Plan for a site in the northern portion of the WSA within Mono Basin would provide protective measures and establish mitigation needs and stipulations to ensure potential geothermal development would not adversely impact this site. Continued motorized vehicle use would provide access for unauthorized collection of artifacts. Other special features including raptor nesting areas, deer migration corridors and habitat for Eriogonum ampullaceum, a sensitive plant species, would only be negligibly impacted by continued motorized recreation use with no impacts anticipated from other uses or management actions.

Conclusion:

The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected development of an open-pit gold mine in the western portion of the WSA and anticipated geothermal development in the northwest portion of the WSA. The open-pit gold mine and the geothermal power facility would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 225 acres. The perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be impaired within 7,500 acres surrounding the mineral and energy developments. Livestock projects would impair the perception of naturalness on an additional 40 acres resulting in short-term minor to negligible impacts to solitude as a result of construction and maintenance. Prescribed burns and chemical treatments on 8,000 acres would result in short-term impacts to naturalness until vegetation is reestablished. Impacts from continued and projected motorized recreation use (1,100 visitor days) would be minor. There would be localized impacts on primitive and unconfined recreation as opportunities would be limited within the areas of mining activity and geothermal development. There would be slight impacts to special features as a result of continued motorized recreation use. There would be no perceptible impacts anticipated from other projected management actions.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action the entire 54,941-acre WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use. Approximately 40 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would remain available for use. The Sierra Safari, a motorcycle poker run, with up to 400 participants, would continue to utilize the vehicle routes in the WSA. Motorized recreation use is anticipated to increase slightly from the current 1,000 visitor days per year to 1,100 visitor days.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which is projected to increase from the current annual level of 1,000 visitor days to 1,100 visitor days.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

All proposed livestock grazing and range improvement projects would be implemented in the WSA. This includes 8,000 acres of planned vegetative manipulations by means of either prescribed burning (5,500 acres) or chemical treatment (2,500 acres). The purpose of the vegetative manipulations would be to increase livestock forage by 569 AUMs. Other projects include six water developments and two pipelines. Total AUMs allotted within the WSA would increase from the current 2,855 AUMs to a total of 3,424 AUMs. Existing operations including vehicle use for sheepherding and maintenance of 4 miles of fenceline and 2 miles of pipeline would continue.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact to livestock grazing and range improvements. All existing operations and proposed projects would be permitted, including 8,000 acres of vegetative manipulations to increase forage production by 569 AUMs to a total of 3,424 AUMs.

Impacts on Mineral Development

There would be no impact on mineral development within the WSA under the Proposed Action. Projected exploration and development within an area of moderate potential for metallic minerals would be permitted. Exploration within the western portion of the WSA where approximately 60 mining claims exist is anticipated to lead to the potential development of a 145-acre open-pit mining operation for disseminated gold.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on mineral development. Exploration and development of a moderate potential for metallic minerals would potentially lead to the development of an open-pit gold mine in the western portion of the WSA.

Impacts on Geothermal Development

Under the Proposed Action, the entire WSA would be available for geothermal exploration and development. Pending lease applications would be processed. Exploration in the west half of the WSA which is in the Mono-Long Valley KGRA is anticipated to result in the development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource. The potential for geothermal resources in the western third of the WSA is high with a moderate potential in the remainder of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on geothermal development under the Proposed Action. Exploration and development of geothermal resources would be permitted in the WSA. Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource is projected.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Under the Proposed Action, development of geothermal resources, projected livestock projects, and continued motorized recreation use could lead to potential impacts on cultural resources within the WSA. Development of geothermal resources is projected for the northwest portion of the WSA within the Mono Basin where a protective, research-oriented Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) has been prepared for a site within this area of predicted high sensitivity for cultural sites. Prior to approval of geothermal exploration and development activities, a surface inventory for cultural resources would be required to establish the presence and location of sites in order to either avoid potential sites or mitigate potential impacts. Additionally, the objectives of and stipulations established as part of the CRMP would provide guidance for development to minimize potential impacts.

Development of a water pipeline for livestock use would result in trenching across the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade in the southwest portion of the WSA to bury the pipeline. Prior to trenching activities, a location for crossing the grade would be identified after a surface inventory is conducted. A crossing would be identified in a location where there would be no disturbance to remnants of the railroad or associated artifacts. Impacts are anticipated to be negligible.

Continued motorized recreation use and vehicle access within the WSA would contribute to the unauthorized collection of artifacts which is presently occurring within the WSA. While this is not a common occurrence, unauthorized collection of artifacts has been noted in the WSA and is considered an adverse impact.

All other management actions and projected surface disturbance is either within areas of less than high sensitivity or are not anticipated to result in any impacts to cultural resources. For all surface-disturbing activities a surface inventory for cultural resources would be required prior to implementation to establish the location of potential cultural sites and develop mitigating measures if necessary.

Conclusion:

Under the Proposed Action, cultural resources within the WSA would be vulnerable to impacts resulting from geothermal resource development, construction of a pipeline for livestock use, and continued motorized recreation use. Surface inventories prior to surface-disturbing activities, and an existing Cultural Resource Management Plan would limit potential impacts within areas of predicted high cultural resource sensitivity and to the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad. Mitigating measures would be established to either avoid cultural sites or salvage potential artifacts. Continued motorized vehicle use in the WSA would contribute to continued unauthorized collection of artifacts.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

Mining activities associated with an open-pit gold mine and development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource would result in adverse impacts particularly to wilderness values which would be lost on 225 acres. Preplanning and immediate reclamation of disturbed areas would greatly reduce the potential for adverse impacts. Development of range improvement projects, including vegetative manipulations would result in only minor, short-term, unavoidable adverse impacts. Continued and projected motorized recreation use would not result in any significant adverse impacts due to the relatively low level of use (1,100 visitor days) which is designated as limited to the approximately 40 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Activities such as geothermal development, construction of a water pipeline for livestock use and continued motorized recreation use could lead to potential unavoidable loss of cultural resources within the WSA.

Relationship Between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Granite Mountains WSA the ongoing uses include motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, livestock grazing, and wildlife management. Under the Proposed Action, projected mining activities in the west portion of the WSA and geothermal development in the northeast portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 225 acres. Planned vegetative manipulations on 8,000 acres in the central, south, and southeast portions of the WSA would increase forage production for livestock use as well as slightly benefit wildlife. For the remainder of the WSA, future development options would remain open. Continued and projected levels of motorized recreation use (1,100 visitor days) and livestock grazing (3,424 AUMs) would not likely impact long-term productivity within the WSA.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Mining activity and geothermal development would result in an irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness values on 225 acres as well as the irretrievable commitment of the mineral and geothermal resources. Throughout the remainder of the WSA, no irreversible or irretrievable commitments

of resources are anticipated except for potential losses of cultural resource values as a result of development activities and continued motor vehicle use within the WSA.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

54,941 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this Alternative, the entire 54,941 within the Granite Mountains WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the protection of wilderness values and the prohibition of motorized recreation use, mineral development, geothermal development, and vegetative manipulations for increased forage production for livestock grazing.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative all 50,981 acres of the Granite Mountains WSA would designated wilderness. All wilderness values within the WSA would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and the special features of the WSA including deer migration corridors, raptor nesting areas, a sensitive plant species (Eriogonum ampullaceum) and cultural resource values would be retained and slightly enhanced.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness due to the closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use. Approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be eliminated. These primitive vehicle routes would slowly begin to naturally revegetate with invading sagebrush and low shrubs.

Projected mining activity on 60 mining claims in the western portion of the WSA would be precluded due to the low probability of a valid existing rights determination. Potential development of an open-pit gold mine in the vicinity of these mining claims would be prohibited. Naturalness would be retained within the projected 145-acre mine site and the perception of naturalness within the surrounding 2,500-acre viewshed would remain unchanged.

Geothermal development would be prohibited under wilderness designation. Development of an anticipated 50-Mw geothermal power facility would be precluded. The 80 acres of projected surface disturbance for drill pads, well pads, and production facilities would not occur and naturalness would be retained. The perception of naturalness would remain unchanged within the surrounding 5,000 acres of open landscape with very gently sloping terrain and low shrub vegetative cover.

Vegetative manipulations would not be permitted. Short-term impacts to naturalness would not occur since the five prescribed burns totaling 5,500 acres and the two chemical treatments totaling 2,500 acres would be precluded under wilderness designation. There would be no 569-AUM increase in livestock use with the current level of 2,855 AUMs remaining unchanged. Therefore, there would be no projected impacts on naturalness due to increased livestock grazing use.

Construction and maintenance of six water developments and two pipelines with water troughs would result in the same localized slight impacts to naturalness as described under the Proposed Action. The perception of naturalness would be impaired on a total of 40 acres within the central and southern portions of the WSA.

Prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to naturalness. Pinyon nut collection would continue to occur without the use of motor vehicles for access. There would be no impacts to naturalness as a result of continued pinyon nut collection as described under the Proposed Action.

Solitude

The prohibition of motorized recreation use within the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to solitude. Due to the low level of existing use (1,000 visitor days) dispersed throughout the 54,941-acre WSA on approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes, solitude would only be enhanced slightly as a result of eliminating this use.

Mining activity associated with development of an open-pit gold mine would be precluded as a result of prohibiting mineral development under wilderness designation. Therefore solitude would be retained in the western portion of the WSA.

Wilderness designation would prohibit projected geothermal development in the northwest corner of the WSA. Solitude would be retained within this open portion of the WSA as a result of precluding development and operations of the potential geothermal power facility.

The five prescribed burns and two chemical treatments proposed for the central, south, and southeast portions of the WSA would not be allowed under wilderness designation. The projected vehicle use and helicopter use associated with these planned vegetative manipulations would be precluded with the predicted short-term impacts to solitude not occurring. Solitude would be retained within this portion of the WSA as a result of prohibiting these vegetative manipulations.

Construction and maintenance of the six water developments and two pipelines with water troughs would result in the same short-term slight to minor impacts on solitude as described under the Proposed Action. The infrequent vehicle use associated with these activities would only locally disturb solitude. The existing livestock operations described under the Proposed Action would continue to result in short-term negligible impacts to solitude.

Consequences

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting would eliminate 25 vehicle trips and associated human activities including chainsaw noise within the 1,000-acre area of accessible pinyon-juniper trees in the east half of the WSA. Solitude would be enhanced slightly. Pinyon nut collection would continue (approximately 30 visitor days) without the use of motor vehicles, thus enhancing solitude slightly.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained throughout the WSA. Precluding mineral development in the western portion of the WSA and geothermal development in the northwest corner would retain primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. Eliminating 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use would enhance primitive and unconfined recreation use within the vicinity of the WSA's approximately 40 miles of primitive vehicle routes. By precluding the vegetative manipulations on 8,000 acres, the projected benefits of improving accessibility for foot travel would be foregone particularly around the lower slopes of Granite Mountain in the southeast portion of the WSA.

Special Features

Construction of a pipeline and water trough in the southwest portion of the WSA would cross the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade. The pipeline would be buried and not result in any perceptible impacts along the railroad grade. As a result of precluding geothermal development and motorized vehicle access in the WSA, cultural resource values would be slightly enhanced and the threat of unauthorized collection of artifacts would be reduced. Other special features including raptor nesting areas, deer migration corridors, and habitat for Eriogonum ampullaceum, a sensitive plant species would be retained and slightly enhanced by precluding potential disruptions as a result of motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would retain and slightly enhance wilderness values by eliminating motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) as well as precluding mineral development and geothermal development. By prohibiting planned vegetative manipulations on 8,000 acres, short-term impacts to naturalness, as well as solitude, would not occur and the existing perception of naturalness would be retained. Proposed livestock projects including water developments and pipelines would impair the perception of naturalness on 40 acres and result in localized short-term minor to negligible impacts to solitude as a result of construction and maintenance. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and special features within the WSA would slightly benefit under wilderness designation.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 54,941-acre WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use including approximately 40 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Closure would eliminate 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use from the WSA. These users would be displaced and would most likely relocate to

other public lands outside the WSA that offer similar opportunities for sightseeing and hunting. However such opportunities are limited particularly in comparison to the size of the WSA. The Sierra Safari motorcycle event which accounts for up to 400 visitor days would also be precluded from using the vehicle routes within the WSA. Opportunities to relocate to other public lands outside the WSA that offer a similar quality of riding experience on challenging routes would be limited due to the limited amount of public lands available for use. Use of lands to the west of the WSA in the Mono Lake Scenic Area would be prohibited due to the U.S. Forest Service's policy concerning organized vehicle use within the Scenic Area. Boundary roads would remain available for use, however the primitive and challenging qualities of the routes do not compare to the primitive vehicle routes within the WSA. Overall, there would be a moderate impact to motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use totaling 1,000 visitor days per year within the 54,941-acre WSA would be foregone. Opportunities to shift this use to other nearby public lands are limited and may result in an overall slight loss of use within the general area. Impacts to the Sierra Safari would mostly necessitate rerouting of their course. Overall, there would be a moderate impact to motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

Under the All Wilderness Alternative all existing livestock use would continue and projected livestock improvements would be permitted with the exception of planned vegetative manipulations. Five prescribed burns planned for 5,500 acres and two chemical treatments totaling 2,500 acres would be prohibited. The projected increase of 569 AUMs of livestock forage as a result of the 8,000 acres of vegetative treatments would be foregone. Livestock use would continue to be allocated at the current 2,855 AUMs. The existing grazing allotments are not economically dependent upon the increased AUMs. However, the foregone use would not allow the projected utilization of potentially available forage. There would be a minor impact on livestock grazing use.

Conclusion:

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, planned vegetative manipulations on 8,000 acres would be precluded and a projected increase of 569 AUMs would be foregone. Current livestock use (2,855 AUMs) would continue and all other projected improvements including six water developments and two water pipelines would be permitted. Overall, there would be a minor impact on livestock grazing and range improvements.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, the entire 54,941 acres of the WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral appropriation and entry. Due to the low probability of determining valid existing rights for the approximately 60 mining claims in the western portion of the WSA, all

mining activity would be terminated. Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone, particularly within the area of moderate potential for metallic minerals in the western portion of the WSA. A projected open-pit mine for disseminated gold would be precluded. There are no other minerals within the WSA with a development potential that indicates known mineral values that would be foregone.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would result in closing the entire 54,941 acres to mineral entry. Exploration and development of potential mineral resources within the WSA would be foregone, including a potential deposit of disseminated gold in the western portion of the WSA. Development of a potential open-pit gold mine would be prohibited.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Geothermal leasing, exploration, and development would be prohibited within the entire 54,941-acre WSA. Development of a potential 50-Mw geothermal resource would be foregone. Geothermal resource potential ranges from high in the western third of the WSA to moderate throughout the remainder. The western one-half of the WSA lies within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA. Development potential is moderate within the KGRA and low throughout the remainder. Due to the unknown existence and nature of the potential geothermal resources as well as the limited amount of geothermal energy activity including exploration there would only be a minor impact on geothermal resource development. Additionally, demand for electric power sources forecasted by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) does not exceed the available supply of power from existing and planned sources.

Conclusion:

Geothermal resource development would be prohibited. Development of a potential 50-Mw geothermal resource would be foregone. Over the long term this would result in a minor impact.

Impact on Cultural Resources

Wilderness designation of the WSA would likely result in a slight positive benefit to potential cultural resources within the WSA particularly the areas of predicted high sensitivity for cultural sites. Geothermal exploration involving 80 acres of surface disturbance including 12 miles of road construction would be precluded as would 1,000 visitor days of continued motorized recreation use. Unauthorized collection of artifacts would be projected to decrease. Potential impacts to the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade would continue to be negligible as described under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

There would be slight positive benefits to cultural resources within the WSA due to precluding geothermal development and continued

motorized recreation use. The historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade would potentially be negligibly impacted by development of a planned water pipeline for livestock use.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

35,981 Acres Recommended Suitable for Wilderness Designation
18,960 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative 35,981 acres within the Granite Mountains WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 18,960 acres would be managed for multiple use.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the beneficial impact on wilderness values, as well as the prohibition of motorized recreation use and vegetative manipulations for the purpose of increasing livestock grazing levels within the portion of the WSA designated wilderness. Within the portion of the WSA not designated wilderness the primary impacts relate to wilderness values as a result of mineral development, development of geothermal resource, vegetative manipulations, and continued motorized recreation use.

Impacts to Wilderness Values

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 35,981 acres would be designated as wilderness, and would receive special legislative protection for wilderness values. Within the remaining 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness, none of the wilderness values would receive special legislative protection. Wilderness values throughout the WSA include naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features which include deer migration corridors, raptor nesting areas, a sensitive plant species (Eriogonum ampullaceum), and cultural resource values.

Within the designated portion of the WSA, these wilderness values would be retained and slightly enhanced. Wilderness values within the nondesignated portion of the WSA would be subjected to multiple resource management including continued motorized recreation use, development of an open-pit gold mine, development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource development, and vegetative manipulations for increased livestock use.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use (800 visitor days per year) and closing approximately 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness in the northern and eastern portion of the WSA. These primitive vehicle routes would slowly begin to revegetate naturally with invading sagebrush and low shrubs.

There would be no mining or geothermal development activities permitted in the 35,981-acre portion of the WSA designated as wilderness.

Consequences

Planned vegetative manipulations including prescribed burning (4,850 acres) and chemical spraying (2,500 acres) would be prohibited. Short-term impacts to naturalness would not occur and the perception of naturalness would be retained within the treatment areas. The projected increase of 533 AUMs within the designated portion of the WSA would not occur. Therefore, there would be no projected impacts on naturalness due to increased livestock use. Livestock grazing use would remain at 1,713 AUMs within the designated portion of the WSA.

Construction and maintenance of six water developments and two pipelines with water troughs would result in the same localized slight impacts to naturalness as described under the Proposed Action. Of these projects, three water developments would occur in the portion of the WSA designated as wilderness. The perception of naturalness would be impaired on 15 acres within the designated portion and 25 acres within the nondesignated portion.

The 1,000 acres of accessible pinyon pine and juniper are in the eastern half of the WSA within the designated portion of the WSA. Fuelwood cutting (25 visitor days and 50 cords per year) would be prohibited as would vehicle use (25 visitor days) for access associated with pinyon nut collection. The impacts under this alternative would be as described under the All Wilderness Alternative.

The continued use of motorized vehicles within the remaining 18,960 acres would maintain approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes in an unnatural condition either without vegetation or as "two-tracks." The perception of naturalness would be impaired only within the vicinity of these routes due to the variations in terrain and vegetation, and the designation of motor vehicle use in the WSA as limited to existing routes and trails. The projected increase in motorized recreation use from the current 200 visitor days per year to 400 visitor days would continue to maintain a low level of use.

Development of a projected open-pit mine for disseminated gold would occur in the western portion of the WSA in the portion of the WSA not designated as wilderness. Impacts to naturalness would be the same as described under the Proposed Action. Naturalness would be lost on 145 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired within a 2,500-acre viewshed. Mineral development would result in moderate localized impacts to naturalness.

Geothermal resource development activities would be located within the nondesignated portion of the WSA in the northwest corner of the WSA. Development of a potential 50-Mw geothermal power facility would result in the same impacts to naturalness as described under the Proposed Action. There would be a direct loss of naturalness on 80 acres and the perception of naturalness would be impaired within approximately a 5,000-acre viewshed.

Two planned prescribed burns (400 acres and 250 acres) would occur in the nondesignated portion of the WSA over a 2-year period. The prescribed burns would temporarily impair the perception of naturalness within the central and southern portions of the WSA as a result of the charred and

blackened appearance of the landscape. Within these areas of vegetative manipulations, grasses would become reestablished over a period of two grazing seasons. These adverse impacts would gradually diminish as the invading shrub species begin to blend with the surrounding landscape. The increased forage production would result in an additional 36 AUMs of livestock use for a total of 1,178 AUMs. This increase in use would result in negligible impacts to naturalness.

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude would be slightly improved within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness as a result of closing the area to motorized recreation use. Due to the low level of use (800 visitor days) dispersed throughout 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes, solitude would be slightly enhanced.

By precluding the 7,350 acres of vegetative manipulations within the designated portion of the WSA, solitude would be retained. The projected short-term impacts to solitude from the use of helicopters and support vehicles would not occur.

Construction and maintenance of the six water developments and two pipelines with water troughs would result in the same short-term slight to minor impacts on solitude as described under the Proposed Action. The infrequent vehicle use associated with these activities would only locally disturb solitude. Three of the six water developments would be within the designated portion of the WSA in the southeast corner. The existing livestock operations including vehicle use associated with sheepherding and maintenance of existing improvements would continue to result in short-term negligible impacts as described under the Proposed Action.

Motorized recreation use within the 18,960 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness would continue on approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes. This use is anticipated to increase from the current 200 visitor days per year to a total of 400 visitor days. This increase would continue to maintain a low level of motor vehicle use and would not significantly affect solitude. Due to the variety of terrain and vegetation as well as the expansive nature of the WSA and dispersed use patterns, impacts to solitude would be minor. Solitude would be most impaired during the first weekend in June when 400 participants of the Sierra Safari motorcycle event use the existing routes for their annual poker rally.

Mining activities in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would result in the same localized impacts to solitude as described under the Proposed Action. Development of an open-pit gold mine within the western portion of the WSA would adversely impact solitude within a 2,500-acre area. However, the overall impact within the entire WSA would be minor.

Development of a projected 50-Mw geothermal facility in the nondesignated portion of the WSA would occur as described under the Proposed Action. Solitude would be diminished within approximately 5,000 acres surrounding the potential geothermal development in the northwest portion of the WSA.

Consequences

The two prescribed burns (400 acres and 250 acres) planned for the central and southern portions of the WSA would be within the nondesignated area. Solitude would be disrupted over a 2-day period for each burn. Human activity associated with vehicle use and helicopter use as well as smoke would adversely impact solitude during this period.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained within the 35,981 acres in the northern and eastern portions of the WSA designated as wilderness. Eliminating 800 visitor days of motorized recreation use would enhance primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities in the vicinity of the approximately 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes closed to motorized vehicle use. By precluding the vegetative manipulations for livestock grazing on 7,350 acres, the projected benefits of improving accessibility for foot travel would be foregone particularly around the lower slopes of Granite Mountain in the southeast portion of the WSA.

Within the remaining 18,960 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness, projected development of an open-pit gold mine and development of a 50-Mw geothermal facility would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation on a total of 225 acres in the west and northwest portions of the WSA. Projected motorized recreation use of 400 visitor days utilizing 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes would diminish opportunities within the vicinity of these routes. The 650 acres of prescribed burns would offer increased accessibility for foot travel on a localized basis.

Overall, primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities would generally be retained with only localized minor impacts.

Special Features

Within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness, the special features including deer migration corridors, raptor nesting areas on Granite Mountain, and habitat for Eriogonum ampullaceum, a sensitive plant, would be retained and enhanced by precluding potential disruptions as a result of motorized recreation use. Cultural resource values would be enhanced as a result of closing approximately 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes and prohibiting motor vehicle use which would reduce the threat of unauthorized collection of artifacts.

The special features in the remaining 18,960 acres include raptor nesting areas along Dry Creek, the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade and other cultural resources would be potentially affected by management actions within this nondesignated portion of the WSA. Construction of a pipeline and water trough in the southwest portion of the WSA would cross the historic Bodie-Mono Mills railroad grade. The pipeline would be buried and located so as not to impact any remnants along the railroad grade. Cultural resources would continue to be vulnerable to the threat of unauthorized collection of artifacts due to continued motor vehicle access and use of this portion of the WSA. Cultural resource values and areas of predicted high sensitivity are primarily located in portions of the WSA

away from projected management actions. A protective, research-oriented Cultural Resource Management Plan for a site in the northern portion of the WSA within Mono Basin would provide protective measures and establish mitigation needs and stipulations to ensure potential geothermal development would not adversely impact this site. Throughout the WSA, cultural resource inventories would be required prior to any surface-disturbing activity to determine the presence of any cultural sites and the need for mitigation measures to either avoid sites or mitigate potential impacts. Continued motorized recreation use would result in negligible impacts to the raptor nesting areas due to potential disruptions caused by this use.

Overall, special features within the WSA would be retained with only negligible impacts anticipated.

Conclusion:

There would be a slight positive benefit to wilderness values within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness. Elimination of 800 visitor days of motorized recreation use on 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes and precluding vegetative manipulations for increased livestock use (7,350 acres) would retain and enhance the perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude. Special features and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would benefit from prohibiting motorized recreation use. Livestock water developments would impair the perception of naturalness on 15 acres and result in short-term minor to negligible impacts to solitude.

Within the 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness the primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected development of an open-pit gold mine in the western portion of the WSA and anticipated geothermal development in the northwest portion of the WSA. Naturalness would be lost on 225 acres. The perception of naturalness and the sense of solitude would be impaired within 7,500 acres. Livestock projects including prescribed burns would result in short-term impacts to naturalness on 675 acres. Impacts from continued and increased motorized recreation use (400 visitor days) would be minor. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be locally impacted due to mineral and geothermal development as well as continued motor vehicle use of 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes. There would only be negligible impacts on special features due to projected management actions and uses within the nondesignated portion of the WSA.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation of 35,981 acres would prohibit motorized recreation use within the northern and eastern portions of the WSA. Approximately 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 800 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be foregone. A portion of this displaced use would shift to the nonwilderness portion of the WSA and the remainder would most likely relocate to other public lands outside the WSA that offer similar opportunities for sightseeing and hunting. However, such opportunities are limited. The Sierra Safari motorcycle event would be

precluded from using the vehicle routes within the designated portion of the WSA and would have to be rerouted. Opportunities to relocate to other public lands outside the WSA that offer a similar quality of challenging riding experience are limited. However, greater utilization of the routes within the nondesignated portion is anticipated.

Within the remaining 18,960 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness motorized recreation use would continue on approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The current 200 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be anticipated to increase to 400 visitor days due to displaced use from the portions of the WSA designated as wilderness. The Sierra Safari would continue to use this portion of the WSA as part of the annual motorcycle poker rally and is projected to increase the utilization of trails for the event.

Conclusion:

Overall, there would be a minor impact on motorized recreation use as a result of designating 35,981 acres as wilderness. This portion of the WSA including approximately 30 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to motorized recreation use with 800 visitor days of use foregone. The remaining 18,960 acres would continue to provide opportunities for motorized recreation use on approximately 10 miles of primitive vehicle routes. The current use of 200 visitor days would be anticipated to increase to a total of 400 visitor days as a result of displaced use from the designated portion of the WSA. Within the entire WSA there would be a net loss of 600 visitor days of motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Livestock Grazing and Range Improvements

Within the 35,981 acres designated wilderness there would be no vegetative manipulations. Planned prescribed burns and chemical treatment areas totaling 7,350 acres would be prohibited and a projected increase in forage production of 533 AUMs would be foregone. The existing grazing allotments are not economically dependent upon the increased AUMs. However, the foregone use would not allow the projected utilization of potentially available forage. Livestock use would continue at the current level which is 1,713 AUMs within the designated portion of the WSA. There would be a minor impact on livestock grazing use.

Within the 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness two prescribed burns (400 acres and 250 acres) would occur over a 2-year period. This 650 acres of vegetative manipulation would result in an increased forage production of 36 AUMs. Total livestock use in the nondesignated portion of WSA would be 1,178 AUMs.

The other planned livestock projects identified under the Proposed Action which include six water developments and two pipelines with troughs would be implemented. Three of the six water developments would occur in the designated portion of the WSA.

Existing livestock operations would continue including vehicle use for sheepherding. However, vehicle use for the maintenance activities would be limited to supplying materials with general inspection activities done on horseback.

Conclusion:

Overall, livestock use would increase by 36 AUMs to a total of 2,891 AUMs as a result of 650 acres of prescribed burns within the 18,960 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness. Vegetative manipulations (7,350 acres) within the 35,981 acres designated wilderness would be precluded and an increase of 533 AUMs would be foregone. Other planned livestock projects would continue throughout the WSA. There would be a minor impact on livestock grazing and range improvements.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness would be closed to mineral entry. This portion of the WSA is considered to have zero to low potential for minerals. There are no mining claims known to exist in this portion of the WSA. Therefore, there would be no impact on mineral development.

The remaining 18,960 acres would be open to all forms of mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. This portion of the WSA includes a moderate potential for metallic minerals. Development of a potential open-pit mine for disseminated gold would be projected to occur within the western portion of the WSA as described under the Proposed Action. Approximately 60 mining claims are known to exist in this portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact to mineral development. The 35,981 acres of the WSA designated wilderness are considered to have a zero to low potential for minerals. The remaining 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness would be open to all forms of mineral entry. Development of a potential open-pit gold mine would be within the nondesignated portion of the WSA.

Impacts on Geothermal Development

Wilderness designation would prohibit mineral leasing including exploration and development of geothermal resources on 35,981 acres of the WSA. While this portion of the WSA is considered to have a moderate potential for geothermal resources, development potential is considered low. This portion of the WSA is largely outside the Mono-Long Valley KGRA. No development of geothermal resources has been projected for this portion of the WSA. It is anticipated that no development of geothermal resources would be foregone.

Within the 18,960 acres not designated wilderness, mineral leasing activities including exploration and development of geothermal resources would be permitted. This area has a high potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources with a moderate development potential. It is anticipated the development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource would occur in the northwest portion of the WSA near Warm Springs. This portion of the WSA is entirely within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on geothermal development under the Partial Wilderness Alternative. Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource is anticipated within the 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness. While exploration and development within the 35,981 acres designated as wilderness would be prohibited, there is a low development potential although there is a moderate potential for geothermal resources. No development is anticipated therefore no geothermal resource production would be foregone.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, there would be a slight positive benefit to cultural resources within the 35,981 acres designated wilderness. Due to closing this portion of the WSA to motorized access, unauthorized collection of artifacts would be projected to decrease.

Within the remaining 18,960 acres not designated as wilderness, impacts to geothermal resources would be the same as described under the Proposed Actions. Potential impacts to cultural resources would result from anticipated geothermal resource development, construction of a livestock pipeline and continued motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

There would be a slight positive benefit to cultural resources within the 35,981 acres of the WSA designated as wilderness as a result of prohibition of motor vehicle use. Within the remaining 18,960 acres, cultural resources would be vulnerable to potential impacts. Surface inventories to determine the location of potential sites and develop appropriate mitigating measures if necessary as well as an existing Cultural Resources Management Plan would minimize potential impacts as a result of geothermal development and construction of a pipeline for livestock. Continued motorized recreation use within the non-designated portion of the WSA would contribute to continued unauthorized collection of artifacts.

WALFORD SPRINGS
(CA-010-092)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
12,250 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 12,250 acres of the Walford Springs WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the effects of geothermal exploration and development as well as continued motorized recreation use on wilderness values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and none of the wilderness values within the 12,250 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and pronghorn antelope. Impacts to wilderness values would include continued motor vehicle recreational use which is low and expected to remain stable, and anticipated exploration and development of existing geothermal resources.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on 9 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 20 acres of the WSA. The overall low recreation use related to motorized vehicles (550 visitor days annually) as well as the low number of primitive vehicle routes restrict impairment of naturalness to the north and east portions of the WSA. Naturalness in the WSA is expected to be only slightly impacted over the long term (greater than 5 years).

Naturalness would be slightly altered in the central portion of the WSA by a proposed plastic rain collection storage basin that would benefit pronghorn antelope and other wildlife species, as surface area approximately 40 feet by 40 feet in size would be disturbed.

Development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource in the western third of the WSA would impair naturalness values on a 70-acre area of the unit. Associated facilities related to this geothermal development would include 12 miles of roads, 14 production well pads, pipelines and a small power plant. These facilities would be observable from a radial distance of up to 2 miles, thus altering the perception of naturalness within an area of up to 3,000 acres of the WSA due to the lack of topographic and vegetative screening.

The proposed windmill would be located in the northern portion of the WSA and would disturb a surface area of 100 square feet. The windmill would be 30 feet high and observable from a radial distance of up to one-third mile. Impacts to naturalness would be slight and for the most part localized.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on 9 miles of primitive vehicle routes would distract from the feeling of solitude in the north and west portions of the WSA. Solitude would be most impaired during the first weekend of June when 400 participants of the Sierra Safari use the existing routes for their annual motorcycle poker rally. From an overall perspective, vehicle use related to 550 visitor use days per year would have slight impacts on solitude.

Construction of the proposed plastic rain collection storage basin would require the use of a truck to transport materials to the project site. Installation would occur over a 2-day period. Yearly maintenance would require one vehicle trip. Impacts to solitude would be negligible.

The development of a 50-Mw geothermal facility in the western portion of the WSA would have an adverse impact on solitude. Human activity associated with the construction and ongoing operation of the facility would diminish the visitor's sense of seclusion and isolation in a major part of the WSA. The facility's operation would be noticeable from a radial distance of up to 2 miles, thus altering the sense of solitude throughout the WSA due to the lack of vegetative and topographic screening.

Construction of the proposed windmill would require the use of motorized vehicles and equipment. Fifteen vehicle trips during the 10-day project period would have slight impacts on solitude. The project site is located one-quarter mile from the boundary, thus minimizing impacts to solitude.

Existing range improvement maintenance activities requiring the use of vehicles would continue on 7 miles of fencelines. Inspection and maintenance of the fences would occur approximately 14 days every 5 years and require 14 vehicle trips. Maintenance of the proposed windmill would result in 3 vehicle trips over 3 days each year. Placement of salt blocks would require vehicle use 1 day each year. Vehicle use related to maintenance activities would have low impacts to solitude due to the low frequency of vehicle use anticipated for maintenance of facilities.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as hunting would be maintained throughout most of the WSA except for the area surrounding the geothermal development facility and associated structures. In this area, these primitive and unconfined recreation activities would be eliminated. The low level of existing uses as well as projected management actions throughout the remainder of the WSA would marginally affect primitive and unconfined recreation such as hunting.

Special Features

Special features of the WSA include pronghorn antelope habitat. The development of 50-Mw geothermal facility and associated activities would result in a 70-acre loss of antelope habitat. A slight displacement of antelope would occur from this area. The reestablishment of pronghorn antelope in the region has provided this species with a brood and foraging habitat to utilize. Although the number of displaced antelope is unquantifiable, it is assumed to be a low percentage of the population. Thus, impacts to pronghorn antelope and associated habitat is considered to be minor.

Conclusion:

Naturalness, solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation would be moderately impaired by development of a 50-Mw geothermal facility. Naturalness would be lost on 70 acres, and the perception of naturalness and sense of solitude would be impaired within an area of 3,000 acres. Proposed wildlife and range improvements, including maintenance of these and existing facilities, would have low adverse impacts to localized naturalness and solitude. Continued 550 visitor days of motorized recreation use including the Sierra Safari motorcycle poker run in the WSA would result in only slight impacts to wilderness values. Loss of 70 acres of pronghorn antelope habitat due to geothermal development would be a minor impact.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Under the Proposed Action the entire WSA would remain open for motorized recreation use. The existing 9 miles of primitive vehicle routes would be available for use. The Sierra Safari, a motorcycle poker run, with up to 400 participants would continue to utilize the vehicle routes in the WSA. Motorized recreation use is not anticipated to increase noticeably and would remain at approximately the current annual level of 550 visitor days.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on motorized recreation use which would remain at approximately the current annual level of 550 visitor days.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Under the Proposed Action all 12,250 acres within the WSA would be available for geothermal exploration and development. It is anticipated that exploration for geothermal resources would occur in the western one-third of the WSA and that development of a 50-Mw resource resulting in 12 miles of roads and 70 acres would subsequently follow.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on geothermal exploration and development in the WSA.

Consequences

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

The development of a 50-Mw geothermal resource on 70 acres would result in an unavoidable loss of wilderness values and habitat for the pronghorn antelope. Preplanning and the establishment of mitigation measures prior to surface-disturbing activities will minimize the potential for adverse impacts. Development of a rain collection storage basin for wildlife and water development including a windmill for livestock would result in very minor impacts offset by their positive benefits to wilderness values including wildlife as a special feature of the WSA.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

Under the Proposed Action, the WSA would not be designated wilderness and all current and projected short-term uses would continue. However, geothermal resource development is the only activity projected for the WSA that would result in a loss of long-term productivity on 70 acres. The productivity of the remainder of the area would be maintained and not significantly affected by continued motorized recreation use and livestock improvement projects. Development of a rain collection storage basin will contribute to the long-term productivity of the WSA for wildlife.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The only irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources within the WSA is the projected development of a potential 50-Mw geothermal resource. Naturalness would be irreversibly and irretrievably committed to development of production facilities for geothermal development. No other activities are projected that would result in any anticipated irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

12,250 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 12,250 acres of the Walford Springs WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 12,250 acres of the Walford Springs WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and all wilderness values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features would be retained.

Naturalness

There would be a slight, positive effect on naturalness due primarily to the closure of the area to vehicles, even though current vehicular use of

the area is low; i.e., 550 visitor use days annually. Nine miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to vehicles, and used as hiking and equestrian trails.

As in the Proposed Action, the proposed wildlife project consisting of a rain collection storage basin for pronghorn antelope and other wildlife would be constructed with the identical impacts as those identified in the Proposed Action.

Also benefiting naturalness would be the exclusion of any mining exploration and development in the WSA, particularly geothermal activity. Naturalness would be retained by precluding geothermal development. Surface disturbances associated with 12 miles of access roads, a 50-Mw power plant and associated facilities on 70 acres of undisturbed land would be eliminated as a result of wilderness designation. Secondarily, the perceptual impact that would be observable from a radial distance of up to 2 miles would be eliminated, thus eliminating a broad visual impact throughout most of the WSA.

As in the Proposed Action, the proposed range improvement project (a windmill) would be constructed with identical impacts as those presented in the Proposed Action.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the WSA to motorized recreation use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (550 visitor use days), solitude would be enhanced only slightly.

Impacts to solitude associated with vehicle use, construction, and maintenance of the proposed rain collection basin for wildlife would be the same as those discussed under the Proposed Action.

Impacts to solitude as a result of construction and maintenance of the proposed windmill project and associated vehicle use would be the same as those identified under the Proposed Action.

Solitude would be retained as a result of prohibiting geothermal exploration and development within the western portion of the WSA.

Solitude would be slightly benefited during maintenance of existing range improvements under this alternative. Existing fence maintenance would be conducted by personnel who ride to the project sites on horseback. This would eliminate 12 days of motor vehicle use every 5 years in the designated area. Livestock operations would be allowed to use a vehicle to transport fence materials to the project sites at a rate of 2 days every 5 years. Additionally, placement of salt blocks would be done on horseback, eliminating 1 day each of vehicle use in the designated area.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as hunting would be maintained throughout most of the WSA except where geothermal exploration and development would be foregone. The loss of a 50-Mw power plant,

associated structures, and 12 miles of access roads would substantially benefit primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities in the anticipated area of development. Approximately 70 acres of currently undisturbed area would remain available for hunters to utilize under this alternative.

Special Features

The foregone exploration and development of geothermal activity such as a 50-Mw power plant and associated facilities would have a very low benefit to pronghorn antelope and their associated habitat. As a result of the foregone geothermal activity, 70 acres of habitat would remain undisturbed and no pronghorn would be displaced as a result of precluded geothermal development. The reestablishment of pronghorn antelope in the region has provided this species with a brood and foraging habitat to utilize. Although the number of affected antelope is unquantifiable, it is assumed to be a low percentage of the population. Thus, impacts to pronghorn antelope and this habitat are considered to be only slightly beneficial.

Conclusion:

Naturalness, solitude, and localized opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation would be slightly enhanced under the All Wilderness Alternative due to the elimination of 550 visitor days of motorized recreation use and the foregone development of a 50-Mw geothermal facility. Proposed wildlife and range improvements, including maintenance of these and existing facilities, would have negligible adverse impacts to localized naturalness and solitude. There would be a slight benefit to the area's pronghorn antelope habitat.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 12,250-acre WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use including 9 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes. Closure would result in a displacement of motorized recreation users totaling 550 visitor days. These users would most likely relocate to other areas outside the WSA that offer similar opportunities for sightseeing and hunting. However such areas are limited. The Sierra Safari motorcycle event, which accounts for up to 400 visitor days would also be precluded from using the WSA and would relocate to areas outside the WSA particularly the boundary roads to the northeast and southeast. Relocation to these boundary roads particularly the road to the northeast which is a graded county road would diminish the quality of the riding experience on challenging primitive routes. Use of lands to the west in the Mono Lake Scenic Area would be prohibited due to the U.S. Forest Service's policy concerning organized vehicle use in the Scenic Area.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use totaling 550 visitor days per year on 12,250 acres would be foregone. Opportunities to shift use to other nearby areas are limited and may result in an overall slight loss of use within the general area. However, impacts to the Sierra Safari would

mostly necessitate significant rerouting of their course in order to maintain a challenging riding experience. Overall, there would be a moderate adverse impact on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation of the entire 12,250 acres would preclude geothermal exploration and development in the WSA. Based on a moderate to high potential a projected 50-Mw geothermal resource in the western one-third within the Mono-Long Valley KGRA of the WSA would be foregone. The only active geothermal exploration and development is approximately 30 miles south of the WSA in the Long Valley caldera. Current statewide energy projections by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) indicate use of existing facilities and sources including identified projects exceed projected electric power demands through the year 1996.

Therefore, precluding geothermal exploration and development is not considered a quantifiable adverse impact at this time. However, precluding development within the KGRA portion of the WSA over the long term would result in a minor impact.

Conclusion:

Exploration and development of a projected 50-Mw geothermal resource would be foregone. Over the long term, this would result in a minor impact.

MORMON MEADOWS WSA
(CA-010-094)

PROPOSED ACTION (No Wilderness/No Action)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
7,280 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 7,280 acres of the Mormon Meadows WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to wilderness values as a result of development of a gold mining operation and development of a geothermal resource potential as well as continued motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and none of the wilderness values on 7,280 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive types of recreation, cultural resources, sensitive plants, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse. In addition, the unit contains

crucial deer fawning and crucial sage grouse nesting habitat. Impacts to wilderness values would include continued motor vehicle use which is low and expected to remain stable, a projected open-pit gold mine, and a projected geothermal power facility.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would impair naturalness on 10 acres of the WSA. The north third of the WSA would be designated as open to vehicle use. There is, however, little use off existing routes. The overall low recreation use and projected low levels of use related to motor vehicles (350 visitor days per year) as well as the lack of primitive vehicle routes limits impairment to naturalness. Alteration of naturalness due to motor vehicle use is expected to remain minor and stable over the long term.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from grazing utilization would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies these areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

Surface disturbance and construction activities associated with the exploration and discovery of gold in the WSA would result in an open-pit mine. The mine and associated structures would impair the natural character of 210 acres around the mining operation near the WSA's north boundary. The perception of naturalness would be altered on a 400-acre viewshed in the northern portion of the WSA. Impacts to naturalness are expected to be significant in the vicinity of the mining operation due to the size of the development. These impacts would be isolated to the extreme northern tip of the WSA and unnoticeable to the remainder of the WSA.

Surface disturbance and development activities associated with the construction of a 50-Mw geothermal power plant in the WSA's southeast portion would impair naturalness on 92 acres of public land. The perception of naturalness would be altered on a 100-acre viewshed surrounding the facilities. Impacts to naturalness are expected to be significant due to the magnitude of the development. These impacts would be highly localized with the majority of the WSA unaffected due to an intervening ridgeline.

Proposed livestock grazing improvements would slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis. Three proposed spring developments would disturb a total area of 75 square feet in the northwest portion of the unit. Each would be observed from a radial distance of up to 200 feet. The low magnitude of these facilities and their distance from one another alters naturalness only slightly.

Fuelwood harvesting of pinyon pine and juniper would have a low impact on naturalness. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting of dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 40 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps and

limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Pinyon nut collection is expected to have no effect on naturalness since the nuts are collected from the pine cones after the cones have fallen to the surface. The nuts are removed from the cones on site and the cones are randomly returned to the surface.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and in the north third of the WSA which would be designated as open to vehicle use would detract from the feeling of solitude. However, the low level of motor vehicle use, both present and projected (350 annual visits), would make these impacts negligible.

Human activity and operations associated with the anticipated open-pit gold mine would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude in a viewshed zone of 400 acres. Human activity and operations associated with the projected geothermal power facility would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude in a viewshed zone of 100 acres.

Construction and maintenance of the proposed range improvement projects would require vehicle use for 15 days during construction and 3 days of vehicle use every 3 years for inspection and maintenance. The anticipated low use of vehicles for construction and maintenance would have negligible impacts on solitude.

Sheepherders' use of vehicles to herd sheep from June through September would continue to maintain existing impacts to solitude at low levels. The majority of vehicle use would occur in the northern half of the WSA confining most impacts to solitude to this area.

Vehicle use and human activity related to casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would have negligible impacts to solitude. The low use and low availability of fuelwood (20 vehicle trips per year and 840 acres are accessible) would have low impacts on solitude. Chainsaw activity would be very audible during fuelwood cutting. The 15 vehicle trips per year (38 visitor days) related to pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Projected mineral development related to an open-pit gold mine and a geothermal power facility would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 302 acres. These limitations would occur along the northern portion of the WSA in addition to the southeastern edge of the unit.

Special Features

A projected open-pit gold mine disturbing 210 acres of surface along the north boundary could have potential adverse impacts on populations of Phacelia monoensis, a sensitive plant species candidate. However, field inventories will be conducted to mitigate any potential impacts. Additionally surface disturbing restrictions would be imposed to minimize

potential impacts. In addition, a sage grouse strutting ground located in this portion of the unit would likely be eliminated and the crucial nesting area impaired by the mining activity. The mining activity would likely eliminate use of the adjacent meadow as a sage grouse (chick) brood foraging area. Finally, mule deer and pronghorn antelope habitat would be lost in the vicinity of the mine site as well as in the location of the geothermal power facility (southeast corner of WSA). This habitat loss would force pronghorn and deer to relocate to other areas. The geothermal power facility would potentially impair cultural resources at the project location. The predicted cultural sensitivity of the WSA is moderate to high with most sites consisting of hunting camps and pinyon collection areas. Prior to geothermal exploration and development, the project area would be surveyed to identify and salvage any surface and subsurface cultural resources.

Conclusion:

The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected mineral development activity that would occur along the northern boundary and geothermal development along the southeastern boundary. An open-pit gold mine and geothermal power facility would disturb 302 acres of surface and result in a direct loss of naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation. The perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired on an additional 500 acres. The majority of the WSA would be unaffected by development other than continued motorized recreation use of 350 visitor days. Impacts from continued ORV use would be negligible. Mining development would adversely affect sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting habitat. Phacelia monoensis habitat could be potentially impacted by mining activities.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Motorized recreation use will continue in the WSA as prescribed by the Bodie-Coleville MFP which identified the north third of the WSA as designated open and the remainder of the WSA limited to existing routes and trails. The current 350 visitor days of annual use is projected to remain stable over the long term. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes will continue to be used by hunters, snowmobilers, and general sightseers.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would continue and is projected to remain stable at 350 visitor days annually. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Under the Proposed Action the entire WSA would be available for geothermal development. Pending lease applications would be processed. Exploration in the southeast portion of the WSA is anticipated to result in the development of a potential 50-Mw geothermal resource. The potential for geothermal resources is high in the WSA with a moderate development potential.

Conclusion:

Geothermal resource exploration and development could occur within the WSA. Development of a 50-Mw resource is projected. There would be no impacts on exploration or development activities for geothermal resources.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

The wilderness value of naturalness would be unavoidably lost on 210 acres in the northern portion of the WSA where an open-pit gold mine is projected, and on 92 acres along the southeast boundary as a result of geothermal development. Additionally, critical habitat for sage grouse strutting and nesting areas would be lost and habitat for Phacelia monoensis, a sensitive plant, could potentially be adversely impacted due to open-pit mining activity. These impacts will be greatly reduced through preplanning and mitigation measures including reclamation efforts established in the plan of operation required prior to surface disturbance. The minor impacts associated with construction of three spring developments would be offset by the positive benefits of better distribution of livestock.

Relationship Between the Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness all present short-term uses would continue as well as any projected future short-term use. Mining activities and geothermal resource exploration and development would result in a loss of productivity on 302 acres. The productivity of the remainder of the area would be maintained and not significantly affected by continued motorized recreation use or livestock improvement projects. The objectives of the Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan would result in an anticipated enhancement of long-term productivity of riparian habitat.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

The only resources which when committed to development would be irretrievable are the gold potential and geothermal resources projected for development. The wilderness values of naturalness and special features including crucial sage grouse habitat would be lost on 210 acres in the mining area. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

7,280 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 7,280 acres of the Mormon Meadows WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to wilderness values and special features including sensitive plant species candidates, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and sage grouse.

Consequences

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 7,280 acres of the Mormon Meadows WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and all values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features consisting of sensitive plant candidates, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and sage grouse would be retained except for areas where the determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims precludes wilderness protection.

Naturalness

There would be a low, positive effect on naturalness due primarily to the closure of the area to vehicles, even though current vehicular use of the area is low; i.e., 350 visitor use days annually. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to vehicles, and used as hiking and equestrian trails.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from grazing utilization would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies these areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

A moderate probability for determination of valid existing rights of mining claims along the WSA's north edge would result in an open-pit gold mine. Impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to naturalness as a result of foregoing geothermal development opportunities along the west edge of the WSA. Approximately 92 acres of land would remain in its natural state due to prohibition of geothermal development.

The impacts to naturalness under the All Wilderness Alternative by the three proposed spring developments would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

A low positive impact to naturalness would occur as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the WSA. The low demand (40 cords per year) would be accommodated in areas adjoining the unit. Pinyon nut collection would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. The impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action. Approximately 14 visitor use days per year would occur by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas. Pinyon nuts are available in areas adjoining the unit.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (350 visitor use days annually), solitude would be enhanced only slightly.

A moderate probability for determination of valid existing rights of mining claims along the WSA's north edge would result in an open-pit gold mine. Impacts to solitude from the gold mine would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to solitude as a result of foregoing geothermal development opportunities along the WSA's west edge. Approximately 100 acres of the viewshed zone would appear untouched by the works of man and remain inactive, thus enhancing the area's solitude.

Impacts to solitude from vehicle use related to construction and maintenance of three proposed spring improvements under this alternative would be the same as under the Proposed Action except for existing vehicle use related to sheepherding operations. Sheepherders would be restricted to 10 days of vehicle use during the grazing season (June through September). Solitude would be slightly enhanced as a result. Sheepherders could use vehicles along the WSA's boundary roads without limiting their operations.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting would eliminate human activity, associated vehicle use, and chainsaw noise, thus enhancing solitude slightly. Demand for fuelwood is low. Pinyon nut collection would continue (14 visitor days per year) without the use of vehicles, thus enhancing solitude slightly.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the WSA to motorized recreational access would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the unit.

Projected mineral development of an open-pit gold mine would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 210 acres. This limitation would occur along the north edge of the WSA.

The prohibition of geothermal development would enhance primitive and unconfined types of recreation on 92 acres of public land, that would remain undeveloped along the WSA's southeast edge.

Special Features

A projected open-pit mine disturbing 210 acres of public land along the WSA's north boundary could have potential adverse impacts on Phacelia monoensis, a sensitive plant species candidate. However, field inventories will be conducted to mitigate any potential impacts. Additionally, surface disturbing restrictions would be imposed to minimize potential impacts. In addition, a sage grouse strutting ground located in this portion of the unit would likely be eliminated and the crucial nesting area impaired by the mining activity. The mining activity would likely eliminate use of the adjacent meadow as a sage grouse brood (chick) foraging area. Finally, mule deer and pronghorn antelope habitat would be lost in the vicinity of the mine site. This habitat loss would force pronghorn and deer to relocate to other areas.

Consequences

Prohibition of geothermal development would be beneficial to mule deer and pronghorn antelope habitat. Approximately 92 acres of habitat along the WSA's southeast edge would remain undeveloped. Thus, these animals would continue to utilize the available habitat in an unimpaired manner. In addition, any cultural resources situated in an area of likely geothermal development would be benefited. Cultural resources would remain undisturbed as a result of foregone geothermal development.

Conclusion:

The net effect of the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be a slight to moderate enhancement of long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of the area to motor vehicle use, prohibition of geothermal development, and a slight decrease in vehicle use associated with fuelwood cutting, recreation, pinyon nut collection, and sheepherding operations would provide minor benefits to the area's wilderness values. Foregone geothermal development would provide the greatest benefits to wilderness. The probability of valid existing rights determination for mining claims along the northern edge of the WSA precludes effective wilderness management of this area. It is anticipated that an open-pit gold mine would be developed in this area. As a result, wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features would be adversely impacted on 210 acres in the area of mining activity as described under the Proposed Action. The perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired on an additional 400 acres as a result of the mining.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 7,280 acres within the WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use as a result of wilderness designation. Closure of the WSA would result in a loss of 350 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use. Snowmobile use accounts for 200 visitor days of this loss. Other opportunities for snowmobiling occur on BLM public land and U.S. Forest Service land outside the WSA which could absorb this use. The majority of the remaining 150 visitor days is related to hunting, particularly sage grouse. Hunting occurs primarily along the northeast boundary into the upland areas. While wilderness designation would prohibit motorized vehicle use within the WSA, boundary roads would continue to remain open and provide hunting access. It is anticipated that 50 days of hunting use will continue without the use of motor vehicles. Hunting opportunities are available on public land outside the WSA for hunters utilizing motorized access. The adverse impacts to motorized recreation users would only be limited due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would eliminate motorized recreation use in the WSA resulting in the loss of 350 visitor days annually. This loss would be a slight adverse impact due to opportunities on public land outside the WSA.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation would preclude geothermal leasing, exploration, and development within the WSA. This would result in a loss of opportunity to explore and develop the 7,280 acres within the WSA which is considered to have a high potential for geothermal resources with a moderate development potential. A potential 50-Mw geothermal resource is projected for the WSA which would be foregone under wilderness designation. Although the Mono-Long Valley KGRA is adjacent to the southeast border of the WSA in the Long Valley caldera, current statewide energy projections by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) indicate current energy supply will continue to meet electric power demand through the year 1996. Therefore, precluding geothermal exploration and development is not considered a quantifiable adverse impact at this time and even in the long term the loss would result in less than a minor impact.

Conclusion:

Exploration and development of geothermal resources including a projected 50-Mw resource would be foregone. Over the long term, this would result in less than a minor impact.

MT. BIEDEMAN WSA
(CA-010-095)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
12,420 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 12,420 acres of the Mt. Biedeman WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts to wilderness under this proposal would occur from construction of administrative facilities associated with Bodie State Historic Park, development of two open-pit mines, construction of a geothermal power facility, and potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270.

Impact on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and none of the wilderness values on 12,420 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation, sensitive plants, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse. In addition, the unit contains crucial deer fawning and crucial sage grouse nesting habitat. Impacts to wilderness values would include continued motor vehicle use which is low and expected to remain stable, two projected open-pit mines, a projected geothermal power facility, and potential realignment needs for State Route 270.

Consequences

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 17 acres of the WSA. The northwest third of the WSA would be designated as open to vehicle use. There is, however, little use off existing vehicle routes. The overall low recreation use and projected low levels of use related to motor vehicles (450 visitor use days) limit impairment to naturalness. Alteration of naturalness due to motor vehicle use is expected to remain low and stable over the long term (greater than 5 years). It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors will view the WSA from the two boundary roads, State Route 270 and Cottonwood Canyon Road, on their way to and from Bodie State Historic Park.

The development of administrative facilities in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA would disturb 5 acres of public land. Serving Bodie State Historic Park, the facilities would consist of an interpretive center, a 40-car parking lot, two residences, a dormitory, a park office, and 1 mile of new road. These facilities would adversely impact the naturalness of the area by altering a relatively undisturbed landscape.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from livestock grazing (in particular Cottonwood Canyon and the Murphy Springs drainage) would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies the problem areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Those impacts to naturalness include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

Surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery, and development of silver or gold along the northeast portion of the WSA and in the Mormon Meadow area would result in high adverse impacts to naturalness. An open-pit mine and associated facilities in the northeast portion of the unit would disturb 420 acres of public land in addition to 8 miles of associated roads. The perception of naturalness would be altered on a 250-acre viewshed zone around the northeastern portion of the WSA. The open-pit mine and associated facilities in the Mormon Meadow area would disturb an area of 210 acres. The perception of naturalness would be altered on a 350-acre viewshed zone around the Mormon Meadow area. Impacts to naturalness are expected to be significant due to the size and location of these developments.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the southwest corner of the WSA, surface disturbance and development activities associated with construction of a 10-Mw geothermal power plant would impair naturalness on 60 acres of public land. The perception of naturalness would be altered on a 350-acre viewshed zone surrounding the facilities. Impacts to naturalness are expected to be significant due to the size and magnitude of the project.

Proposed livestock grazing improvements would slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis except for the proposed windmill which would have a greater adverse impact on naturalness. The two pipelines would be buried in the north portion of the unit causing a temporary surface disturbance

of 3 feet wide. This surface disturbance would be rehabilitated with native plants within 1 to 2 years. The four proposed reservoirs, scattered throughout the WSA, would disturb a total surface area of 1 acre. Each reservoir would be visible from a radial distance of up to 500 feet. The proposed fence (200 feet) in Cottonwood Canyon would entail removal of some shrubs. The proposed windmill, south of Mt. Biedeman, would occupy a surface area of 160 square feet and would be 30 feet high. An associated water storage tank (8 feet high by 8 feet in diameter) would be sited next to the windmill. All shrubs would be removed at the windmill and storage tank site. The windmill would be visible from a radial distance of up to 1/3 mile. The low magnitude of most of these facilities alters naturalness only slightly except for the windmill and associated storage tank. The impact to naturalness in this case is greater due to greater surface occupancy and increased height visibility. The windmill would preclude water hauling by truck, thus enhancing solitude values.

Fuelwood harvesting of pinyon pine and juniper would have a negligible impact on naturalness. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting of dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 20 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Pinyon nut collection is expected to have no effect on naturalness since the nuts are collected from the pine cones after the cones have fallen to the surface. The nuts are removed from the cones on site and the cones are randomly returned to the surface.

Under emergency conditions, 4¼ miles of State Route 270 would be realigned outside the present right-of-way into the WSA potentially disturbing an area up to 200 feet from the present boundaries. Realignment would necessitate removal of all vegetation, establishment of a roadbed, and asphalting of the roadbed. The naturalness along this realignment would be adversely impaired.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on 10 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and in the northwest third of the WSA which would be open to vehicle use would detract from the feeling of solitude. However, the low level of motor vehicle use, both present and projected (450 annual visits), would make these impacts negligible.

Administrative facilities for Bodie State Park would adversely affect solitude in the northeast portion of the WSA. These facilities would be visible up to a one-half-mile radius from the facilities. Human activity and vehicle use would be most prevalent at the site.

Mining activity associated with the anticipated open-pit gold or silver mines would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude in viewshed zones of 250 acres around the northeast portion of the WSA and 350 acres around the Mormon Meadow area. Activity associated with the projected geothermal power facility would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude within the surrounding area of 350 acres.

Consequences

Construction and maintenance of all proposed range improvement projects would require vehicle use for 43 days during construction. Inspection and maintenance for these projects would require 4 days of vehicle use per year for the pipelines, 8 days of vehicle use every 10 years for the reservoirs, and 3 days of vehicle use per year for the windmill. The anticipated low use of vehicles for construction and maintenance would have low and temporary impacts on solitude.

Impacts to solitude as a result of maintenance to existing grazing facilities would continue at their present low levels. Inspection and maintenance of the existing fence would require 8 days of vehicle use every 5 years and the reservoirs would require a total of 4 days of vehicle use every 10 years.

Sheepherders' use of vehicles would be reduced from present levels of 60 days to 40 days per year due to the proposed construction of a windmill south of Mt. Biedeman. As a result, solitude would be slightly enhanced from the reduction of vehicle use south of Mt. Biedeman.

Vehicle use and human activity related to casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude. The low use and low availability of fuelwood (10 vehicle trips per year and 450 acres are accessible) would have low impacts on solitude. Chainsaw activity would be very audible during fuelwood cutting. The 10 vehicle trips per year (25 visitor days) related to pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude.

Realignment of State Route 270, under emergency conditions, would have temporary impacts to solitude along the north edge of the WSA during construction and repair activity. Heavy equipment, trucks, and personnel would be observed and heard during repair work.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Projected mineral development related to two open-pit mines located in Mormon Meadow and in the northeast portion of the WSA as well as a projected geothermal power facility in the WSA's southwest corner would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 690 acres. In addition, administrative facilities related to Bodie State Park would limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation on 5 acres of public land in the northeast portion of the WSA.

Special Features

A projected open-pit gold mine disturbing 210 acres of surface along the north boundary (Mormon Meadow area) could have adverse impacts on populations of Phacelia monoensis, a sensitive plant species candidate. However, field inventories will be conducted to mitigate any potential impacts. This open-pit mine as well as the projected open-pit mine in the northeast portion of the WSA would likely eliminate the nearby sage grouse strutting grounds and adversely impair the crucial sage grouse nesting areas. These mining activities would likely eliminate use of adjoining meadows as a sage grouse (chick) brood foraging area. The proposed administrative facilities

for Bodie State Park would also impair crucial sage grouse nesting habitat in addition to adversely impacting the brood (chick) rearing area in the nearby meadow complex. Finally, mule deer and pronghorn antelope habitat would be lost in the vicinity of the proposed facilities for Bodie State Park and the mine sites as well as in the location of the geothermal power facility (southwest edge of WSA). This habitat loss would force pronghorn and deer to relocate to other areas. Deer fawning habitat at the projected location of the geothermal power facility would be affected displacing deer fawning around the facility.

Conclusion

The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected mineral development activities expected to occur in the northeast, southwest, and Mormon Meadow portions of the WSA. Two open-pit silver or gold mines and a geothermal power facility would disturb 690 acres of surface and directly impair naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation. The perception of naturalness and solitude would be impaired over an additional 950 acres due to mining and geothermal development activities. Special features of the WSA including sensitive plant habitat (Phacelia monoensis) and crucial sage grouse habitat could be adversely impacted due to mining. Proposed administrative facilities for Bodie State Park would adversely affect wilderness values particularly crucial sage grouse habitat in the northeast portion of the unit. In addition, emergency realignment needs for State Route 270 would necessitate repair and rerouting of the road into the WSA resulting in adverse effects to naturalness and solitude. Livestock grazing improvements would only slightly impair naturalness on less than 5 acres.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Motorized vehicle use would continue on approximately 10 miles of existing routes and trails throughout the majority of the WSA with the northwest third of the WSA being designated open without use restricted to roads and trails. Current motorized use of 450 visitor days is expected to remain stable within the foreseeable future.

Conclusion:

Motorized recreation use would continue in the WSA and is projected to remain stable at 450 visitor days annually. There would be no impacts to motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Recreational Facilities Development

Development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park could occur on public lands located in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA (northeast portion).

Consequences

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park as lands in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA would be available.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Under the Proposed Action the entire WSA would be available for geothermal development. The WSA has a moderate to high potential for geothermal resources. However, development potential is considered low to moderate particularly in the southwest corner of the WSA. Should geothermal resource development occur it is anticipated the 10-Mw resource would be developed in the southwest corner of the WSA.

Conclusion:

The entire WSA would be available for geothermal exploration and development. Development of a potential 10-Mw resource could occur. There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development.

Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

Under the Proposed Action, the State Route 270 to Bodie State Park could be realigned outside the present right-of-way up to a distance of 200 feet into the WSA. Emergency conditions such as road washouts are not uncommon and often necessitate relocation of the road in order to maintain access to the State Park. The roadway follows Clearwater Creek and is bounded on the south by the WSA and on the north by the Bodie Mountain WSA. There would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.

Conclusion:

Realignment of State Route 270 could occur outside the present right-of-way up to a distance of 200 feet into the WSA. There would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.

Impacts on Sage Grouse Strutting Grounds and Nesting Habitat

Under the Proposed Action development of administrative facilities for the Bodie Historic State Park in the northeast portion of the WSA would result in 5 acres of surface disturbance in an area of crucial sage grouse nesting habitat. Additionally, increased human activity at the administrative facilities would adversely impact a brood (chick) rearing area in a nearby meadow complex. Development of open-pit gold or silver mines in the northeast portion of the WSA and in the Mormon Meadow area along the north boundary of the WSA would likely eliminate another sage grouse strutting area and crucial sage grouse nesting areas. Sage grouse populations in the Bodie Hills have declined in recent years indicating that a loss of crucial habitat in the WSA would have a moderate impact on the stability of the sage grouse population.

Conclusion:

Open-pit gold or silver mining activities and development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park would result in the loss of two separate crucial habitat areas for sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting areas. This would result in a moderate impact on the availability of sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting areas in the Bodie Hills and the stability of the Bodie Hills sage grouse population.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

The development of two open-pit mines totaling 630 acres as well as a 10-Mw geothermal development on 60 acres could lead to unavoidable adverse impacts to wilderness values particularly wildlife and sensitive plant habitats. Additionally, the 5 acres of surface disturbance for administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park would result in unavoidable adverse impacts to crucial sage grouse habitat. Preplanning and immediate reclamation of disturbed areas will greatly reduce the potential for adverse impacts. Development of range improvement projects would result in only minor, short-term, unavoidable adverse impacts during construction. Continued motorized recreation use would not result in any significant unavoidable adverse impacts due to the relatively low level of use (450 visitor days) with only very little use occurring off existing primitive vehicle routes.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the WSA there are many ongoing uses including motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, livestock grazing and wildlife management (deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse). Under the Proposed Action future development options will remain open and long-term productivity is not likely to be impacted. However, projected mining activities and geothermal resource development in the WSA would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 690 acres within the WSA. The objectives of the Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan would result in an anticipated enhancement of long-term productivity of riparian habitat.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Activities such as mining and geothermal development could create an irretrievable commitment of the mineral and geothermal resources of the WSA. The wilderness values of naturalness and special features including crucial sage grouse habitat and habitat for *Phacelia monoensis*, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species, could be lost within the mining areas. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

12,420 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 12,420 acres of the Mt. Biedeman WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to wilderness values and special features including sensitive plant candidates, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse.

Impact on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 12,420 acres of the Mt. Biedeman WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and all values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features consisting of sensitive plant candidates, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse would be retained except for areas where the determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims precludes wilderness protection. A proposed windmill would have some adverse impacts on naturalness, but would be offset by beneficial impacts to solitude.

Naturalness

There would be a low, positive effect on naturalness due primarily to the closure of the area to vehicles, even though current vehicular use of the area is low; i.e., 450 visitor use days annually. Ten miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to vehicles, and used as hiking and equestrian trails. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the WSA from the two boundary roads, State Route 270 and Cottonwood Canyon Road.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from livestock grazing (in particular Cottonwood Canyon and the Murphy Springs drainage) would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies the problem areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

The northeast portion of the WSA in the Bodie Bowl would incur beneficial impacts to naturalness as a result of foregone administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park. Five acres would remain undisturbed and in a relatively natural state of appearance.

A moderate and high probability for determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims in Mormon Meadow and in the northeast portion of the WSA, respectively, would result in an open-pit silver or gold mine in each of these areas. Impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to naturalness as a result of foregoing geothermal development opportunities along the southwest edge of the WSA. Approximately 60 acres of land would remain in its natural state due to prohibition of geothermal development.

Impacts to naturalness under this alternative from the proposed range improvements would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

A low positive impact to naturalness would occur as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the WSA. The low demand (20 cords per year) would be accommodated in areas adjoining the unit. Pinyon nut collection would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. The impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action. Approximately 13 visitor use days per year would occur by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas. Pinyon nuts are available in areas adjoining the unit.

Impacts to naturalness from emergency realignment repair of State Route 270 would be foregone. Emergency realignment of the route would be prohibited outside the existing right-of-way. A surface area 200 feet south of the 4¼-mile boundary road would remain undisturbed and in a natural state.

Impacts to naturalness on the nonpublic land (80 acres) portion of the Murphy Springs drainage would be beneficial as a result of the Bureau's acquisition of the area. The purpose of the acquisition would be to prevent any future unforeseen impacts from occurring and to maintain the biological integrity of the drainage.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (450 visitor use days annually), solitude would be enhanced slightly.

Solitude values would be benefited from prohibition of proposed administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park. The proposed use of 5 acres for the facilities would remain untouched and inactive, thus enhancing solitude values.

A moderate and high probability for determination of valid existing rights of existing mining claims in Mormon Meadow and in the northeast portion of the WSA would result in an open-pit gold or silver mine in each of these areas. Impacts to solitude in these two areas would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to solitude as a result of foregoing geothermal development opportunities along the WSA's southwest edge. Approximately 60 acres would be undeveloped and 350 acres in the viewshed zone would appear untouched by the works of man and remain inactive, thus enhancing the area's solitude.

Impacts to solitude from construction of all proposed range improvements would be the same as under the Proposed Action. Impacts to solitude from inspection and maintenance of the proposed and existing range improvements would be slightly enhanced. Vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of proposed and existing range projects would be the same as the Proposed Action except that there would be a 6-day reduction every 5 years for vehicle use related to fence maintenance. Vehicle use would be allowed to drop off fence materials (2 days every 5 years) at the project site; actual maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback. Salt block placement would be done on horseback also, reducing vehicle use by an additional day per year.

In addition, construction of the windmill south of Mt. Biedeman would preclude water hauling for sheep by motor vehicle. Sheepherders would reduce vehicle use related to water hauling by 20 days (from the present 60 days per year) to this area. In addition, the sheepherders would be able to conduct their overall grazing operations using vehicles only 30 days per year by reducing unnecessary vehicle use in the designated area. Thus, vehicle use would be reduced from 60 to 30 days per year in total for sheepherding operations during June through October. Solitude would be slightly benefited from the vehicle use reduction.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting would eliminate human activity, associated vehicle use, and chainsaw noise, thus enhancing solitude slightly. Demand for fuelwood is low. Pinyon nut collection would continue (13 visitor days per year) without the use of vehicles, thus enhancing solitude slightly.

Prohibition of emergency realignment for State Route 270 outside the existing right-of-way would slightly benefit solitude along 4¼ miles of the WSA's northern boundary. Solitude would be maintained from the loss of activity related to heavy equipment use, truck use, and personnel operations.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the WSA to motorized recreational access would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the unit.

Primitive and unconfined recreation values would be benefited by the loss of proposed administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park. Five acres of public land in the northeast portion of the WSA would remain undisturbed, thus maintaining unrestricted freedom of movement.

Projected mineral development of an open-pit gold or silver mine would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 630 acres. This limitation would occur in the northeast portion of the WSA and in the Mormon Meadow area.

The prohibition of geothermal development would enhance primitive and unconfined types of recreation on 60 acres of public land, that would remain undeveloped along the WSA's southwest edge.

Special Features

The projected open-pit mines in the northeast portion of the WSA and in Mormon Meadow would have identical impacts to sensitive plants, sage grouse, mule deer and pronghorn antelope as those described under the Proposed Action.

Prohibition of proposed administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park would benefit crucial sage grouse nesting habitat and the brood (chick) rearing area in the nearby meadow complex. Five acres of mule deer and pronghorn antelope habitat would remain undisturbed. Sage grouse, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope would continue to utilize the unimpaired habitat.

Prohibition of geothermal development would be beneficial to mule deer and pronghorn antelope habitat. Approximately 60 acres of habitat along the WSA's southwest edge would remain undeveloped. Thus, these animals would continue to utilize the available habitat in an unimpaired manner. Deer fawning habitat in the projected area of activity would be preserved.

Conclusion:

The net effect of the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be a slight to moderate enhancement of long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of the area to motor vehicle use, prohibition of geothermal development, prohibition of emergency realignment needs for State Route 270, and a slight decrease in vehicle use associated with fuelwood cutting, pinyon nut collection, and grazing operations would provide slight positive benefits to the area's wilderness values. By precluding development of administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park, crucial sage grouse habitat would be retained. The probability of valid existing rights determination for mining claims along the northeast portion of the WSA and in Mormon Meadow would lead to the development of an open-pit gold or silver mine in each of these areas. As a result, wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features would be adversely impacted over 630 acres in the areas of mining activity as described under the Proposed Action.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 12,420 acres within the WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use under the All Wilderness Alternative. Wilderness designation would eliminate 450 visitor days of motorized recreation use and close 10 miles of existing routes and trails. Snowmobiling accounts for 200 visitor days of this loss. Other opportunities for snowmobiling occur on BLM public lands and U.S. Forest Service lands outside the WSA which could absorb this use. The majority of the remaining 250 visitor days of motorized use are related to hunting access. While wilderness designation would prohibit vehicle use within the WSA, the WSA is almost entirely surrounded by boundary roads which would continue to remain open and

provide access. Hunting opportunities are also available on public lands outside the WSA for hunters utilizing motorized access. The adverse impacts to motorized recreation would be minor due to the availability of opportunities on public lands outside the WSA.

Conclusion:

Motorized vehicle use would be eliminated in the WSA due to wilderness designation resulting in a loss of 450 visitor days. This loss would only result in minor adverse impacts due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA.

Impacts on Recreational Facilities Development

The development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA would not be permitted under wilderness designation. Due to existing land ownership patterns and physical geography, there are few opportunities to construct these facilities elsewhere. The opportunities that do exist are less desirable due to the setting and proximity to the historical sites that comprise the state park. Since other opportunities do exist, the impact of public land not being available is not a significant adverse impact. However, from a functional standpoint, there would be adverse impacts to the development of facilities for the park.

Conclusion:

Since few opportunities exist outside the WSA for development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park, there would be adverse impacts to the park as a result of the development not being permitted within the WSA.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation would preclude geothermal leasing, exploration, and development in the WSA. This would result in a loss of opportunity to explore and develop the WSA for geothermal resources which is considered to have a moderate to high potential for geothermal resources. Development potential is low to moderate. A potential 10-Mw resource in the southwest portion of the WSA would be precluded from development. The projected small size and lack of strong indications of a geothermal resource in the WSA as well as the lack of demand for additional electric power sources forecasted by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) result in a less than minor impact over the long term by not exploring or developing the WSA.

Conclusion:

Exploration and development of geothermal resources within the WSA including a potential 10-Mw resource would be foregone. Over the long term this would result in less than a minor impact.

Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

Wilderness designation would preclude realignment of State Route 270 into the WSA. The roadway follows Clearwater Creek and is bounded by the WSA on the south and the Bodie Mountain WSA on the north. Emergency realignment outside the present right-of-way as a result of conditions such as washouts would not be allowed in the WSA. Therefore, costly reconstruction including cribbing along the stream banks would be the only alternative. This could result in a potential moderate adverse impact since this is the primary access to Bodie State Historic Park. Should the Bodie Mountain WSA also be designated as wilderness additional adverse impacts could be incurred.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would limit opportunities and increase costs for emergency realignment of State Route 270 by precluding use of the WSA. This would result in a potential moderate adverse impact.

Impacts on Sage Grouse Strutting Grounds and Nesting Habitat

Wilderness designation would preclude the development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historical Park within the WSA. This would benefit a crucial sage grouse nesting habitat and the brood (chick) rearing area. However, it is anticipated that valid existing rights would be established that would permit projected mineral development to occur on the Mormon Meadow area along the north boundary of the WSA. Mining activity associated with a 210-acre open-pit gold mine would likely result in the loss of an area of crucial sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting habitat. As described under the Proposed Action, this loss would result in a moderate impact to the availability of this habitat and sage grouse population stability.

Conclusion:

Prohibition of the development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historical Park in the WSA would benefit an area of crucial sage grouse nesting habitat and brood (chick) rearing area. Mineral development occurring due to valid existing rights would likely result in the loss of an area of crucial strutting grounds and nesting habitats. This loss would be a moderate impact on the availability of crucial habitat and the Bodie Hills sage grouse population stability.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,300 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
3,120 Acres Nonwilderness

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 9,300 acres as wilderness with the remaining 3,120 acres of the WSA as nonwilderness. The primary impacts under this proposal relate to beneficial and adverse effects on wilderness values, mineral withdrawal, motorized vehicle access prohibitions, and emergency realignment needs for State Route 270.

Consequences

Impact on Wilderness Values

Under the Partial Wilderness designation, 9,300 acres would receive special legislative protection for all wilderness values. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features consisting of sensitive plant candidates, sage grouse, mule deer and pronghorn antelope would be retained except for areas where the determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims precludes wilderness protection.

Wilderness values on the remaining 3,120 acres would be subjected to effects of multiple-use resource management including mineral resource development, emergency realignment needs for State Route 270, motorized recreational access, and casual use related to fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of closure of the 9,300 acres designated wilderness including 9 miles of primitive vehicle routes which would eliminate 450 visitor days annually which are related to motor vehicle use. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors on their way to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the WSA from Cottonwood Canyon Road and State Route 270.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats (Cottonwood Canyon and Murphy Springs drainage) from livestock grazing in the designated portion would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies the problem areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

Based on a moderate probability of valid existing rights for existing mining claims in Mormon Meadow, surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery, and development of gold in this portion of the designated area would result in high adverse impacts to naturalness. The 210 acres of open-pit mine and associated facilities in Mormon Meadow would have the same impacts under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 909 AUMs within the designated portion of the WSA. Proposed range improvements would slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis except for the proposed windmill which would have a greater adverse impact on naturalness. The 1-mile pipeline would be buried and would disturb a surface area 3 feet wide which would be rehabilitated within 1 to 2 years. The three proposed reservoirs would disturb a total surface area of three-quarter acre and some shrubs would be removed for the proposed 200 feet of fence. The proposed windmill would occupy a surface area of 160 square feet and would be 30 feet high. An associated water storage tank (8 feet high by 8 feet in diameter) would be sited next to the windmill. All shrubs would be removed at the windmill and storage tank site. The windmill would be

visible from a radial distance of up to one-third mile. The low magnitude of most of these facilities impact naturalness only slightly except for the windmill and associated storage tank. The impact to naturalness in this case is greater due to greater surface occupancy and increased height visibility. However, the windmill would preclude water hauling by truck, thus enhancing solitude values.

The continued use of motor vehicles on 1 mile of primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 2 acres of the WSA. The overall low recreation use and projected low levels of use would slightly impact naturalness. Alteration of naturalness due to motor vehicle use is expected to remain low; overall motorized recreation use would increase slightly from 50 to 150 visitor use days annually in the long term. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the nondesignated portions of the WSA from State Route 270 and Cottonwood Canyon Road.

The development of administrative facilities in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA would disturb 5 acres of public land. The facilities would be located in the nondesignated area. Serving Bodie State Historic Park, the facilities would consist of an interpretive center, a 40-car parking lot, two residences, a dormitory, a park office, and 1 mile of new road. These facilities would adversely impact the naturalness of the area by altering a relatively undisturbed landscape.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats (Cottonwood Canyon and the Murphy Springs drainage) from livestock grazing in the nondesignated portion would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies the problem areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

Surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery, and development of silver or gold in the nondesignated, northeast portion of the WSA would result in high adverse impacts to naturalness. A 420-acre open-pit mine in addition to 8 miles of associated roads would be developed. Impacts to naturalness in this area would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the southwest corner of the WSA, which is not designated for wilderness, impacts to naturalness from the 10-Mw power plant and associated facilities would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Within the nonwilderness area, cattle and sheep use would continue to be allotted at 274 AUMs. The proposed 1-mile pipeline would have a surface disturbance of 3 feet wide which would be rehabilitated within 1 to 2 years. The proposed reservoir would disturb a surface area of one-quarter acre. As a result, impacts to naturalness from the aforementioned range improvements would be negligible.

Consequences

The entire pinyon-juniper woodland zone would lie in the nondesignated area. Thus, impacts to naturalness from fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

The 4¼ miles of State Route 270 along the north boundary of the WSA would contain a corridor 200 feet wide in order to maintain or repair the route under emergency road conditions, etc. Located in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, impacts to naturalness from emergency repair would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude would be slightly improved on 9,300 acres in the designated portion of the WSA as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (400 visitor use days annually), solitude would be enhanced slightly.

Based on a moderate probability of valid existing rights for existing mining claims in Mormon Meadow (which is in the designated portion), surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery and development of gold in this area would have the same impacts on solitude as those described in the Proposed Action.

Vehicle use related to construction of proposed range improvements in the designated area would have slight adverse impacts on solitude. It is anticipated that vehicle use would be required for construction of a 1-mile pipeline, three reservoirs, and a windmill. Approximately 31 days of vehicle use would be required to install these facilities. The proposed fence would be built from Cottonwood Canyon Road. Inspection and maintenance of these facilities would have low impacts on solitude. It is anticipated that vehicle use would be needed 2 days each year for the pipeline, 6 days every 10 years for the reservoirs, and 3 days per year for the windmill. The anticipated low use of vehicles for construction and maintenance would have low and temporary impacts on solitude. The construction of the windmill south of Mt. Biedeman would benefit solitude by reducing water hauling by trucks approximately 20 days per year. In addition, the sheepherders would be able to conduct their overall grazing operations using vehicles 30 days per year by reducing unnecessary vehicle use in the designated area. Thus, vehicle use would be reduced from 60 to 30 days per year in total for sheepherding operations during June through October. Overall solitude would be slightly benefited from the vehicle use reduction.

Impacts to solitude as a result of maintenance to existing grazing facilities in the designated area would continue at their present low levels. Inspection and maintenance for 2 miles of fence would be conducted from the Cottonwood Canyon Road; the two reservoirs would require a total of 4 days of vehicle use every 10 years.

Motorized recreational vehicle use in the nondesignated portion would continue on 1 mile of primitive vehicle routes--used mostly by snowmobilers, hunters, and sightseers. Impacts to solitude would be low along this route due to the projected low increase of motor vehicle use--from 50 to 150 visitor days annually.

Proposed administrative facilities for Bodie State Park would be constructed in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Impacts to solitude would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Impacts to solitude from surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery, and development of silver or gold in the nondesignated, northeast portion of the WSA would be the same as the Proposed Action. A 420-acre open-pit mine and 8 miles of associated roads would be developed in this area.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the southwest portion of the WSA which would not be designated for wilderness, impacts to solitude from the 10-Mw power plant would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Impacts to solitude from proposed range improvements in the nondesignated area would include vehicle use related to construction of a 1-mile pipeline and construction of a reservoir. The reservoir would require 2 days of vehicle use and the pipeline would require 10 days of vehicle use. Inspection and maintenance of the proposed improvements would require vehicle use 2 days every 10 years for the reservoir. Thus, impacts to solitude would be low and temporary. The 2-mile existing fence would require vehicle use for inspection and maintenance at a rate of 4 days every 5 years. One day of vehicle use per year would occur for salt block placement. Impacts to solitude, in these cases, would be very low and temporary.

The entire pinyon-juniper woodland zone would lie in the nondesignated area. Thus, impacts for solitude from fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

The 4¼ miles of State Route 270 along the north boundary of the WSA would contain a corridor 200 feet wide in order to maintain or repair the route under emergency road conditions, etc. Located in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, impacts to solitude from emergency repair would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the designated portion of the WSA (9,300 acres) to motorized recreational access would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the unit.

As in the All Wilderness Alternative, projected mineral development of an open-pit gold mine in the Mormon Meadow would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the designated portion on a total area of 210 acres.

Impacts to primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the nondesignated area would be lost on 5 acres of public land due to construction and use of the proposed administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park.

Consequences

Projected mineral development in the nondesignated, northeast portion of the WSA would impair primitive and unconfined types of recreation. A projected open-pit gold or silver mine would limit primitive and unconfined recreation on 420 acres of land in addition to 8 miles of associated roads.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the southwest corner of the WSA which is not designated for wilderness, impacts to primitive and unconfined types of recreation would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Special Features

For the designated portion of the WSA, the moderate probability of determining valid existing rights of existing mining claims would result in a projected open-pit gold mine (210 acres) in Mormon Meadow that has the same impacts on special features such as sensitive plant candidates, sage grouse, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope as those described in the Proposed Action.

For the nondesignated portion, it is projected that a 420-acre gold or silver mine and the proposed administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park, both located in the northeast portion of the WSA, would have the same impacts to special features as those described under the Proposed Action.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the southwest portion of the WSA, which is not designated for wilderness, impacts to special features would be the same as those identified in the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

Designation of 9,300 acres as wilderness would primarily result in low positive benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly to naturalness and solitude due to the elimination of 400 visitor days related to motor vehicle access and the reduction of motor vehicle use related to grazing operations and maintenance of some grazing facilities. On the other hand, the moderate probability of determining valid existing rights for mining claims in the Mormon Meadow area would probably result in a 210-acre open-pit gold mine in this area. As a result, this operation would severely impact naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features in this localized area of the unit.

On the 3,120 acres not designated as wilderness, there would be high adverse impacts to wilderness values from the projected development of a 420-acre open-pit gold or silver mine in the northeast portion of the WSA. The projected development of a 60-acre geothermal power facility in the southwest corner of the WSA, and the proposed administrative facilities (5 acres) for Bodie State Historic Park to be located in the northeast portion of the WSA would seriously alter wilderness values at these locations. An increase in motorized recreation use from the current 50 visitor days to a projected 150 visitor days would result in only minor impacts to naturalness and

solitude. In addition, a corridor 200 feet wide along the northern boundary road, State Route 270, would be provided for emergency realignment needs. Development of these facilities would adversely impair naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features in localized areas of development or use.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Approximately 76% (9,300 acres) of the WSA would be closed to all motorized recreation use. Nine miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed. Wilderness designation of the 9,300 acres would eliminate 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use. As described under the All Wilderness Alternative, opportunities on public lands outside the WSA would somewhat offset the closure to result in only minor adverse impacts to the users.

The 3,120 acres not designated wilderness would remain open with motorized recreation use projected to increase from the current 50 visitor days to a projected 150 visitor days as a result of the closure of the majority of the WSA. The use will be limited to 1 mile of existing primitive routes.

Conclusion:

Impacts resulting from closure of 9,300 acres (76%) of the WSA to motorized recreation use eliminating 400 visitor days would be minor due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA and an increase of 100 visitor days in the nonwilderness portion. Overall motorized recreation use would decrease by 300 visitor days to a total of 150 visitor days.

Impacts on Recreational Facilities Development

Development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park could occur on public lands located in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA (northeast portion). This portion of the WSA is within the area not designated as wilderness in the northeast corner of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park as lands in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA would be available.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Geothermal leasing, exploration, and development would be precluded on the 9,300 acres of the WSA designated wilderness. While the WSA has a moderate to high potential for occurrence of geothermal resources, development potential within the designated portion is low. Due to the lack of strong resource indications and a low development potential in this area impacts to geothermal development are negligible.

Within the 3,120 acres not designated as wilderness geothermal leasing, exploration and development could occur. A potential 10-Mw resource is projected for development in the southwest corner of the WSA. There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

Precluding geothermal resource development on the 9,300 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would result in only a negligible impact due to a low development potential. Geothermal exploration and development could occur within the remaining 3,120 acres which includes a potential 10-Mw resource. There would be no impact to geothermal resource development within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

The boundary for the Partial Wilderness Alternative would be set back 200 feet from State Route 270 to allow a corridor for emergency realignment of the roadway. Emergency conditions such as washouts along Clearwater Creek are not uncommon and often necessitate relocation of the road in order to maintain the primary access to the Bodie State Historic Park. As a result of providing the 200-foot-wide corridor there would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270 since the Partial Wilderness Alternative boundary establishes a 200-foot-wide corridor along the roadway for reconstruction.

Impacts on Sage Grouse Strutting Grounds and Nesting Habitat

For the Partial Wilderness Alternative impacts on sage grouse strutting grounds and nesting habitat would result in moderate impacts on the availability of these crucial habitat areas and the stability of the Bodie Hills sage grouse population as described under the Proposed Action. Development of the administrative facilities for Bodie State Historic Park would occur in the Bodie Bowl in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA resulting in 5 acres of surface disturbance. In the wilderness portion of the WSA it is anticipated that a determination of valid existing rights would permit the development of a 210-acre open-pit gold mining operation. Since the activities that impact the crucial sage grouse habitat are the same as those described under the Proposed Action the impacts are also the same.

Conclusion:

As a result of mining activities and the development of administrative facilities for the Bodie State Historic Park, there would be moderate impacts on the availability of crucial sage grouse habitat and the stability of the Bodie Hills sage grouse population as described under the Proposed Action.

BODIE MOUNTAINS WSA
(CA-010-099)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
23,360 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 23,360 acres of the Bodie Mountains WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts to wilderness values under this proposal would occur from projected development of an open-pit sulphur mine in Cinnabar Canyon, anticipated construction of a geothermal power plant facility, a proposed prescribed burn, physical improvement of two vehicle routes for grazing operations, and potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and none of the wilderness values on 23,360 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation, sensitive plant candidates, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, waterfowl, and cultural values. In addition, the unit contains crucial deer fawning and sage grouse nesting habitat. Impacts to some of these wilderness values would include continued motor vehicle use which is low and expected to remain stable, a projected open-pit sulphur mine, a projected geothermal power facility, a proposed prescribed burn, vehicle route improvements, and potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on 16 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 25 acres of the WSA. The entire WSA would be designated as open to vehicle use. There is, however, little use off existing vehicle routes. The overall low recreation use and projected low levels of use related to motor vehicles (900 visitor use days) limit impairment to naturalness. Alteration of naturalness due to motor vehicle use is expected to remain low and stable over the long term (greater than 5 years). In addition, it is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors will view the WSA from the south boundary road, State Route 270, on their way to and from Bodie State Historic Park.

Six proposed erosion control gabions and 400 feet of fence in Clark Canyon would impair localized naturalness of wetland habitats on an area of 140 square feet for each gabion. This low impact to naturalness would be offset by long-term benefits to the Clark Canyon drainage and wetland area. Present gabions at Clark Canyon have been successful in reducing erosion and curtailing gullying action, returning the wetland area to a

crucial initial state of stability. It is anticipated that riparian vegetation would invade the area as the wetland complex repairs itself. Ultimately, the complex would return to a natural state of appearance. Approximately 400 feet of fence would be constructed to keep livestock out of the wetland area. Some shrubs would be removed during fence installation.

Proposed rehabilitation of three springs and one meadow in the south half of the WSA would include installation of three erosion control gabions which would disturb a surface area of 140 square feet each. Three fence exclosures totaling one-half mile would be constructed around the wetland improvements to keep livestock out of the sensitive wetland areas. Some shrubs would be removed during fence construction. Adverse impacts to naturalness would remain low and temporary, and ultimately be offset by benefits of wetland restoration and reestablishment of riparian vegetation. Naturalness in the long term would be significantly improved by the proposed facilities. Erosion, soil compaction, water table reduction, and establishment of ·eric plants would be curtailed.

The proposed 75-acre vegetative treatment which would probably be a prescribed burn in Hot Springs Canyon would have a short-term adverse impact on naturalness. The canyon would appear charred and blackened for 1 to 2 years as initial species of grasses and forbs invade and establish in the denuded area. The perception of naturalness would be altered primarily in the canyon bottom for a distance of approximately 1 mile. Within 3 to 5 years, shrubs would reestablish and through time, the adverse impacts would diminish as the invading vegetation blends with the surrounding nonburn areas. It is anticipated that the treatment would improve wildlife habitat and provide additional forage for livestock. An additional 30 AUMs of forage would be available for livestock.

Surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery, and development of sulphur in Cinnabar Canyon would result in adverse impacts to naturalness. An open-pit mine and associated facilities in this portion of the unit would disturb 420 acres of public land in addition to 8 miles of associated roads. The perception of naturalness would be altered on a 250-acre viewshed zone around the southern tip of the WSA. Impacts to naturalness are expected to be locally significant due to the size and location of this development.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the west quarter of the WSA near the Travertine Hot Springs area, surface disturbance and development activities associated with construction of a 10-Mw geothermal power plant would impair naturalness on 40 acres of public land. In addition, 5 miles of associated roads are anticipated. The impacts to the perception of naturalness in the viewshed zone around the projected facility would be limited due to the area's varied topography and dense stand of pinyon-juniper plant communities.

Proposed livestock grazing improvements would slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis except for the proposed 3-mile improvement of two existing primitive vehicle routes which would have a greater adverse impact on naturalness. The three proposed pipelines (totaling 1.5 miles) would be buried in Hot Springs Canyon, Big Alkali, and near an unnamed

spring in the WSA's southeast corner. The pipelines would have a total surface disturbance of 3 feet wide. This disturbance would be rehabilitated with native plants within 1 to 2 years. The three spring developments located in the WSA's northeast corner and in Cinnabar Canyon would have a total surface disturbance of 75 square feet. Each would be observed from a radial distance of up to 200 feet. The three proposed reservoirs located in various portions of the unit would have a total surface disturbance of three-quarter acre and would be visible from a radial distance of up to 500 feet. Two proposed fences (totaling 6 miles) at Travertine Hot Springs and east of Mormon Meadow would result in some shrub removal. The proposed improvements on 3 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes in the south portion of the WSA would require use of a bulldozer or road grader and would adversely alter the primitive nature of these routes to improved road systems that would be visibly apparent and accessible to all types of users.

Fuelwood harvesting of pinyon pine and juniper would have a slight impact on naturalness. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting of dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 70 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Pinyon nut collection is expected to have no effect on naturalness since the nuts are collected from the pine cones after the cones have fallen to the surface. The nuts are removed from the cones on site and the cones are randomly returned to the surface.

Under emergency conditions, 4 3/4 miles of State Route 270 would be realigned outside the present right-of-way into the WSA potentially disturbing an area up to 200 feet from the present boundaries. Realignment would necessitate removal of all vegetation, establishment of a roadbed, and asphalting of the roadbed. The naturalness along this realignment would be adversely impaired.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on 16 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and in the entire WSA which would be open to vehicle use would detract from the feeling of solitude. However, the low level of motor vehicle use, both present and projected (900 annual visits), would make these impacts negligible.

On-site construction and vehicle use for the proposed six erosion control gabions, three spring improvements, and all associated fences would have short-term, low impacts to solitude in different local areas of the WSA such as Clark Canyon and portions of the WSA's south half. Overall, the erosion control gabions and fences in Clark Canyon would require a total of 30 days vehicle use during construction. Inspection and maintenance of these facilities would require vehicle use 6 days every 3 years for the gabions and 2 days per year for the fences. The three spring improvements (including fences) in the WSA's south half would require vehicle use a total of 30 days during construction. Inspection and maintenance for these facilities would require vehicle use 3 days every 3 years for the gabions and 3 days of vehicle use per year for the fences.

Consequences

The impacts to solitude from vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of existing erosion control gabions and fences in Clark Canyon would continue at the present negligible levels of 6 days of vehicle use every 3 years for the gabions and 1 day per year for the 200 feet of fence. Impacts to solitude would remain very low.

The proposed 75-acre vegetative treatment would probably consist of a prescribed burn that would adversely impair solitude for 2 days during burning and mop-up operations. Vehicle use, human activity, and smoke would adversely affect solitude during this period. Approximately 1 mile along the canyon bottom and rim would be adversely affected.

Human activity associated with the anticipated open-pit sulphur mine would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude in viewshed zone of 250 acres around the southern tip of the WSA. Human activity associated with the projected geothermal power facility would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude in the immediate area--around the Travertine Hot Springs area. Impacts would be significant on a limited localized basis only due to the varied terrain and dense pinyon-juniper plant communities in the area. At the minimum, it is anticipated that the active utilization on 40 acres of public land and 5 miles of associated roads developed for the facilities would impair on-site solitude values adversely.

Construction and maintenance of all proposed range improvements would require vehicle use for 62 days during construction. Impacts to solitude would occur in various locations of the WSA. Inspection and maintenance for these projects would require 6 days of vehicle use per year for the pipelines, 6 days of vehicle use per year for the spring developments, 6 days of vehicle use every 10 years for the reservoirs, 12 days every 5 years for the fences, and 5 days every 10 years for improvements of existing primitive vehicle routes. The anticipated low use of vehicles and diverse locations for construction and maintenance of proposed improvements would have low and temporary impacts on solitude.

Impacts to solitude as a result of maintenance to existing grazing facilities would continue at their present low levels. Inspection and maintenance would require motor vehicle access 2 days per year for the pipeline, 24 days every 5 years for the fences, 1 day every 5 years for the exclosure, and 4 days every 10 years for the reservoirs. Motor vehicle use related to existing sheepherding operations and salt block placement by cattle operators would continue at present levels of 40 days and 3 days per year, respectively. The large size of the WSA, its varied terrain and diverse plant communities contribute to screening existing grazing related vehicle uses, thus impairing solitude values at relatively low levels.

Vehicle use and human activity related to casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude. The low use and low availability of fuelwood (35 vehicle trips per year and 1,620 acres are accessible) would have low impacts on solitude. Chainsaw activity would be very audible during fuelwood cutting. The 15 vehicle trips per year (40 visitor days) related to pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude.

Realignment of State Route 270, under emergency conditions, would have temporary impacts to solitude along the south edge of the WSA during construction and repair activity. Heavy equipment, trucks, and personnel would be observed and heard during repair work.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Projected mineral development related to the open-pit mine located in Cinnabar Canyon as well as a projected geothermal power facility in the WSA's west quarter would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 460 acres.

Special Features

A projected open-pit mine disturbing 420 acres of surface in Cinnabar Canyon would have potential adverse impacts on a unique sphagnum peat bog located in this area. The mine and projected geothermal facility in the west quarter of the WSA, probably in the Travertine Hot Springs area would directly affect habitat for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse located in the area. This habitat loss would force pronghorn, deer, and sage grouse to relocate to other areas. In addition, the geothermal power facility would potentially impair cultural resources at the project location. The predicted cultural sensitivity of the WSA is very high with most sites consisting of hunting camps, obsidian collection areas, and pinyon collection sites. Prior to geothermal exploration and development, the project area would be surveyed to identify and salvage any surface and subsurface cultural resources.

Proposed and existing wetland improvements in Clark Canyon would improve the wetland and stream complex in the canyon. Currently, siltation and erosion has been corrected initiating a process of repair and restoration. Three springs and one meadow in the south half of the WSA would incur similar benefits from proposed improvements.

The proposed prescribed burn in Hot Springs Canyon would provide area wildlife with succulent forage that the area currently lacks.

Conclusion:

The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected mineral development activities expected to occur in the Cinnabar Canyon area and geothermal development in the west quarter of the WSA. An open-pit sulphur mine and a geothermal power facility would disturb 460 acres of surface and directly impair naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and some special features of the WSA. A proposed vegetative treatment (probably a prescribed burn) and physical improvement of two primitive vehicle routes would adversely impact naturalness and solitude to varying degrees. In addition, potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270 would necessitate repair and rerouting of the road into the WSA resulting in adverse effects to naturalness and solitude.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

All motorized recreation use would continue throughout the WSA on 23,360 acres which would be designated as open to vehicle use. Approximately 900 visitor days of motorized use presently occur within the WSA on approximately 16 miles of primitive vehicle routes. Vehicle use off existing routes is low. Present use levels are expected to remain stable. Opportunities for snowmobilers, hunters, and general sightseers that utilize motor vehicles would continue to be available. The Modesto Ridgerunners would continue to use the existing routes in the WSA for their annual 4-WD poker rally.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use as the entire WSA would remain open for use. Motorized recreation use is anticipated to remain stable at the current 900 visitor days.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

The entire 23,360 acres within the WSA would be open to geothermal leasing, exploration, and development. The WSA has a high potential for geothermal resources with a moderate development potential. Under the Proposed Action, a potential 10-Mw geothermal resource is projected for development near Travertine Hot Springs.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. The entire WSA would be available for geothermal development including a projected 10-Mw resource.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Potential geothermal resource development near Travertine Hot Springs would occur in an area with a very high sensitivity predicted for cultural resources. The 40 acres of surface disturbance and 5 miles of road construction as a result of developing a 10-Mw resource could impact cultural sites. The predominant site types are randomly scattered and typical of lithic procurement areas including obsidian collection sites and pinyon sites. Surface inventories would be conducted prior to submission of a plan of operations to determine mitigation measures including relocation or rerouting of facilities and salvage of sites to minimize potential impacts. Development would likely only result in minor adverse impacts to cultural resources.

Although the WSA experiences 900 visitor days of motorized recreation use, very little occurs off existing vehicle routes. Therefore, impacts from motorized recreation use would be negligible.

Conclusion:

Surface-disturbing activities associated with potential geothermal development would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources in areas of predicted very high sensitivity. Surface inventories to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts would be required.

Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

Under the Proposed Action, State Route 270 to Bodie State Historic Park could be realigned into the WSA outside the present right-of-way. Emergency conditions such as road washouts are not uncommon and often necessitate relocation of the road in order to maintain access to the State Park. The roadway follows Clearwater Creek and is bounded on the north by the WSA and on the south by the Mt. Biedeman WSA. Since realignment could occur within the WSA there would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.

Conclusion:

Realignment of State Route 270 could occur into the WSA. There would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

The development of a 420-acre open-pit mine and a 10-Mw geothermal development on 40 acres would lead to unavoidable adverse impacts to wilderness values particularly naturalness and special features including wildlife habitat and cultural resources. Development of range improvements and wildlife habitat projects including a 75-acre prescribed burn and riparian rehabilitation would result in only minor, short-term, unavoidable adverse impacts. Continued motorized recreation use would not result in any significant unavoidable adverse impacts since use is projected to remain stable with only very little use occurring off existing primitive vehicle routes.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the WSA there are many ongoing uses including motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, livestock grazing and wildlife management. Under the Proposed Action, projected mining in the Cinnabar Canyon area and geothermal resource development near the Travertine Hot Springs would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 460 acres. Long-term productivity would be enhanced along Clark Canyon as a result of rehabilitation and erosion control projects. For the remainder of the WSA future development options will remain open and long-term productivity is not likely to be impacted.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Activities such as mining and geothermal development could create an irretrievable commitment of the mineral and geothermal resources as well as the wilderness values on the 460 acres to be disturbed. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

23,360 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 23,360 acres of the Bodie Mountains WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to wilderness values and special features including mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, and wetland values.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 23,360 acres of the Bodie Mountains WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and all values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features consisting of sensitive plant candidates, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, and cultural values would be retained except for areas where the determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims precludes wilderness protection.

Naturalness

There would be a slight, positive effect on naturalness due to the closure of the area to vehicles, even though current vehicular use of the area is low; i.e., 900 visitor use days annually. Sixteen miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to vehicles, and used as hiking and equestrian trails. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the WSA from the southern boundary road, State Route 270.

Impacts to naturalness from proposed wetland habitat projects would be the same as those under the Proposed Action except that the proposed vegetative treatment (probably a prescribed burn) would be prohibited resulting in a short-term benefit to naturalness in Hot Springs Canyon.

A high probability for determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon would result in an open-pit sulphur mine totaling 420 acres in addition to 8 miles of associated roads. Impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to naturalness as a result of foregoing geothermal development opportunities in the west quarter of the WSA, particularly around the Travertine Hot Springs area. Approximately 40 acres of land would remain in its natural state due to prohibition of geothermal development.

Impacts to naturalness under this alternative from the proposed range improvements would be the same as those under the Proposed Action except for the physical improvements to 3 miles of primitive routes which would be prohibited, thus maintaining the naturalness of these primitive vehicle routes in the southern portion of the WSA.

A slight positive benefit to naturalness would occur as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the WSA. The low demand (70 cords per year) would be accommodated in areas adjoining the unit. Pinyon nut collection would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. The impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action. Approximately 19 visitor use days per year would occur by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas. Pinyon nuts are available in areas adjoining the unit.

Impacts to naturalness from emergency realignment repair of State Route 270 would be foregone. Emergency realignment of the route would be prohibited outside the existing right-of-way. A surface area 200 feet north of the 4 3/4-mile boundary road would remain undisturbed and in a natural state.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (900 visitor use days annually), solitude would be enhanced slightly.

Solitude values under this alternative as a result of wildlife management actions would be slightly benefited. The prohibition of a prescribed burn in Hot Springs Canyon would forego 2 days of fire and mop-up operations. Additionally, solitude would be slightly benefited by a reduction of vehicle use for maintenance of all existing and proposed fences related to those actions. Vehicle use would be reduced from 6 days to 2 days per year for fence maintenance. The vehicle use would be allowed to drop off fence materials at project sites. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback.

A high probability for determination of valid existing rights of existing mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon would result in an open-pit sulphur mine in this area. Impacts to solitude in this area would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to solitude as a result of foregoing geothermal development opportunities in the WSA's west quarter, primarily around the Travertine Hot Springs area. Approximately 40 acres would remain undeveloped and inactive, thus enhancing the area's solitude.

Impacts to solitude from construction of all proposed range improvements would be the same as under the Proposed Action except for the slight improvement in solitude that would occur from prohibiting physical construction of two primitive vehicle routes in the southern portion of the WSA. The prohibition of physical route improvement would forego 5 days of vehicle use during construction.

Vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of proposed and existing maintenance projects would be the same as the Proposed Action except that there would be reduction in vehicle use for fence maintenance--from 36 days every 5 years for all fences to 6 days every 5 years. Thus, 30 days of vehicle use related to fence maintenance would be foregone, slightly enhancing solitude. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback. Vehicles would be used to drop off fence materials at the project site.

Impacts to solitude from motor vehicle use related to existing sheepherding operations would be slightly benefited as a result of reducing unnecessary vehicle trips in the designated area. Vehicle use would be reduced from 30 days per year to 20 days. In addition, cattle operators would transport salt blocks into the area by horseback, reducing vehicle use in the designated area by 3 days per year.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting would eliminate human activity, associated vehicle use, and chainsaw noise, thus enhancing solitude slightly. Demand for fuelwood is low. Pinyon nut collection would continue (19 visitor days per year) without the use of vehicles, thus enhancing solitude slightly.

Prohibition of emergency realignment for State Route 270 outside the existing right-of-way would slightly benefit solitude along 4 3/4 miles of the WSA's southern boundary. Solitude would be maintained from the loss of activity related to heavy equipment use, truck use, and personnel operations.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the WSA to motorized recreational access would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the unit.

Projected mineral development of an open-pit sulphur mine would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 420 acres. This limitation would occur in the Cinnabar Canyon area.

The prohibition of geothermal development would enhance primitive and unconfined types of recreation on 40 acres of public land, that would remain undeveloped along the WSA's west quarter, in particular at the Travertine Hot Springs area.

Special Features

The projected open-pit sulphur mine in Cinnabar Canyon would have the same impacts on special features as described in the Proposed Action.

Prohibition of geothermal development would be beneficial to mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, and cultural values. Approximately 40 acres of habitat along the WSA's west quarter (particularly in the Travertine Hot Springs area) would remain undeveloped. Thus, the aforementioned fauna would continue to utilize the available habitat in an unimpaired manner. Any existing cultural sites would remain undisturbed.

Impacts to wetland values in Clark Canyon and other areas would be the same as those in the Proposed Action.

The prohibition of the prescribed burn in Hot Springs Canyon would adversely affect wildlife by foregoing the development of succulent forage that the area currently lacks.

Conclusion:

The net effect of the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be a slight to moderate enhancement of long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of the area to motor vehicle use, prohibition of physical improvements to existing vehicle routes, prohibition of geothermal development, prohibition of potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270, and a decrease in vehicle use associated with fuelwood cutting, wetland habitat improvements, pinyon nut collection, and grazing operations would provide some benefits to the area's wilderness values. Foregone geothermal development would provide the greatest benefits to wilderness. It is anticipated that the high probability of valid existing rights determination for mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon would result in development of an open-pit sulphur mine. As a result, wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features would be adversely impacted on 420 acres in Cinnabar Canyon.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

The entire 23,360 acres within the WSA would be closed to motorized recreation use. Wilderness designation would eliminate 900 visitor days and close 16 miles of primitive vehicle routes to motorized recreation use. Existing use within the WSA including the Modesto Ridgerunners 4-WD poker rally would be relocated outside the WSA. Few additional opportunities exist on public lands outside the WSA which could absorb the increased use. There would be minor adverse impacts to users associated with closing the WSA to motorized recreation use. Hunters would continue to have direct access from boundary roads on the north and south as well as primitive routes accessing the WSA from the east and west.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would close the entire 23,360 acres within the WSA to motorized recreation use and eliminate 900 visitor use days. Impacts on motorized recreation use would be minor due to opportunities available outside the WSA.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation would close the entire 23,360 acres within the WSA to geothermal leasing, exploration, and development. While the WSA has a high potential for the occurrence of geothermal resource the development potential is only moderate. Development of a projected 10-Mw resource would be foregone. The projected small size and lack of strong indications of a geothermal resource within the WSA as well as the lack of demand for additional electric power sources forecasted by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) result in a less than minor impact over the long term by not exploring or developing the WSA.

Conclusion:

Exploration and development of geothermal resources within the WSA, including a potential 10-Mw resource, would be foregone. Over the long term this would result in less than a minor impact.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Wilderness designation of the WSA would likely result in minor positive benefits to potential cultural resources within the WSA's areas of predicted very high sensitivity for cultural sites. Projected geothermal development involving 40 acres of surface disturbance and 5 miles of road construction would be precluded as would 900 visitor days per year of continued motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

There would be minor positive benefits to cultural resources due to precluding geothermal resource development and continued motorized recreation use.

Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

Wilderness designation would preclude realignment of State Route 270 into the WSA. The roadway follows Clearwater Creek and is bounded by the WSA on the north and the Mt. Biedeman WSA on the south. Emergency realignment outside the present right-of-way as a result of conditions such as washouts would not be allowed in the WSA. Therefore, costly reconstruction including cribbing along the stream banks would be the only alternative. This could result in a potential moderate adverse impact since this is the primary access to Bodie State Historic Park. Should the Mt. Biedeman WSA also be designated wilderness additional adverse impacts could be incurred.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would limit opportunities and increase costs for emergency realignment of State Route 270 by precluding use of the WSA. This would result in a potential moderate adverse impact.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

9,790 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
13,570 Acres Nonwilderness

The Partial Wilderness would designate 9,790 acres as wilderness with the remaining 13,570 acres of the WSA as nonwilderness. The primary impacts under this proposal relate to beneficial and adverse effects on wilderness values, mineral withdrawal, motorized vehicle access prohibitions, prohibition of physical improvements to existing primitive vehicle routes, and potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 9,790 acres would receive special legislative protection for all wilderness values. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive, and unconfined recreation, and special features consisting of mule deer, sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, and waterfowl would be retained except for areas where the determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims precludes wilderness protection.

Wilderness values on the remaining 13,570 acres would be subjected to effects of multiple-use resource management including mineral resource development, potential emergency realignment needs for State Route 270, motorized recreational access, geothermal development, a proposed prescribed burn in Hot Springs Canyon, physical improvements to existing primitive vehicle routes, and casual use related to fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of closure of 9,790 acres including 3 miles of primitive vehicle routes which would eliminate 400 visitor use days annually related to motor vehicle use. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the WSA from the southern boundary road, State Route 270.

Impacts to naturalness from proposed rehabilitation of three springs and one meadow in the designated area would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Based on a high probability of valid existing rights for existing mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon, surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery and development of public land

would result in an open-pit sulphur mine. Impacts to naturalness in the designated area from the 420-acre mine would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 1,020 AUMs within the designated portion of the WSA. Proposed range improvements would have minor impacts on naturalness in localized and scattered portions of the designated area. The two proposed pipelines (totaling 1 mile) would have a surface disturbance of 3 feet wide which would be rehabilitated with native plants in 1 to 2 years. The proposed reservoir in Big Alkali would disturb one-quarter acre of surface and would be visible up to a radial distance of 500 feet. The proposed 2-mile fence near State Route 270 would entail some shrub removal. The proposed 1 3/4 mile improvement to an existing vehicle route in the southeast portion of the designated area would be prohibited, thus maintaining the naturalness of this primitive vehicle route.

Approximately 300 acres of accessible pinyon-juniper woodland would be prohibited for fuelwood cutting in the designated portion of the WSA. A low positive impact to naturalness would occur as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the designated area. The low demand (10 cords per year) would be accommodated in areas adjoining the unit. Pinyon nut collection would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. The impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action. Approximately 8 visitor use days per year would occur by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas. Pinyon nuts are available in areas adjoining the unit.

The continued use of motor vehicles in the nondesignated area on 13 miles of primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 17 acres of the WSA. The overall low motorized recreation use and projected low levels of use (700 visitor days annually) would slightly impact naturalness. Alteration of naturalness due to motor vehicle use is expected to remain low; overall visitor use would slightly increase from 550 visitor use days to 750 visitor use days annually in the long term (greater than 5 years). It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the nondesignated portions of the WSA from State Route 270, the unit's southern boundary road.

Impacts to naturalness from proposed wetland projects in Clark Canyon and the proposed vegetative treatment (probably a prescribed burn) in Hot Springs Canyon would be the same as impacts identified in the Proposed Action. These projects and impacts would occur in the nondesignated area.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the west quarter of the WSA (particularly Travertine Hot Springs), which is not designated for wilderness, impacts to naturalness from the 10-Mw power plant and associated facilities would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Within the nonwilderness area, cattle and sheep use would continue to be allotted at 1,250 AUMs. Proposed projects in this area would have low impacts on naturalness. The proposed one-half-mile pipeline would result in a surface disturbance 3 feet wide. The two proposed reservoirs near

Big Alkali would disturb a total surface area of one-half acre and be visible up to a radial distance of 500 feet each. The three proposed spring improvements would disturb a total surface area of 75 square feet. Each spring improvement would be observable up to a radial distance of 200 feet. The 4 miles of proposed fence would entail some shrub removal. The proposed physical improvement to 1¼ miles of a primitive vehicle route near Cinnabar Canyon would result in adverse impacts that are similar to those described in the Proposed Action.

Approximately 1,320 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Impacts to naturalness would be low. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting of dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 60 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Impacts to naturalness from pinyon nut collection would be the same as those described in the Proposed Action Alternative.

The 4 3/4 miles of State Route 270 along the south boundary of the WSA would contain a corridor 200 feet wide in order to maintain or repair the route under emergency road conditions, etc. Located in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, impacts to naturalness from emergency repair would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude would be slightly improved on 9,790 acres in the designated portion of the WSA as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (400 visitor use days annually), solitude would be slightly enhanced.

Impacts to solitude from rehabilitation of three springs and one meadow in the designated area would be the same as the Proposed Action except that vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of associated fences would be reduced from 3 days per year to 1 day per year in order to drop off fence materials at the project site. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback.

Based on a high probability of valid existing rights for existing mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon, which is in the designated portion, surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery and development of public land would result in an open-pit sulphur mine. Impacts to solitude would be the same as those identified in the Proposed Action.

Vehicle use related to construction of proposed range improvements in the designated area would have low adverse impacts on solitude. It is anticipated that vehicle use would be required for construction of two pipelines, one reservoir, and a 2-mile fence. Approximately 32 days of vehicle use would be required to construct these facilities. Inspection and maintenance of these facilities would have low impacts on solitude. It is

anticipated that vehicle use would be needed 4 days every year for the pipelines, 2 days every 10 years for the reservoir, and 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years to transport fence materials to the project site. Actual fence repair would be done by personnel on horseback. The foregone 1 3/4-mile primitive vehicle route improvement would marginally enhance solitude by reducing vehicle use by 4 days in the unit. Overall, the anticipated low use of vehicles for construction and maintenance of proposed range improvements would be low and transient.

Impacts to solitude as a result of maintenance to existing grazing facilities in the designated area would continue at their present low levels in most cases except where reduction of vehicle use relates to fence maintenance. Inspection and maintenance would require vehicle use 2 days every year for the pipeline, 1 day every 5 years for the exclosure, 4 days every 10 years for the reservoirs, and 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years for the fence to transport materials to the project site. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback.

Impacts to solitude from vehicle use related to existing grazing (sheepherding) operations in the designated area would be slightly improved--from 20 days per year to 10 days per year. Additionally, salt block placement would be done by horseback--reducing vehicle use by 1 additional day per year.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting on 300 accessible acres of pinyon-juniper woodland would eliminate human activity, chainsaw noise, and associated vehicle use (5 vehicle trips per year) in the designated area, thus enhancing solitude slightly. Demand for fuelwood is low. Pinyon nut collection would continue (8 visitor days per year) without the use of vehicles, thus enhancing solitude slightly.

The 4 3/4 miles of State Route 270 along the south boundary of the WSA would contain a corridor 200 feet wide in order to maintain or repair the route under emergency road conditions, etc. Located in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, impacts to solitude from emergency repair would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Motorized recreational vehicle use in the nondesignated portion would continue on 13 miles of primitive routes--used by the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual poker rally in addition to hunters, sightseers, and snowmobilers. Impacts to solitude would be slightly adverse along the routes due to low visitation and a long season of use. Motorized recreation use is projected to increase from 500 visitor use days to 700 per year.

Proposed and existing wetland projects in Clark Canyon and the proposed vegetative treatment (probably a prescribed burn) would have the same effects on solitude as those described under the Proposed Action. These projects lie in the nondesignated portion of the WSA.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the west quarter of the WSA (particularly around Travertine Hot Springs) which is not designated for wilderness, impacts to solitude from the 10-Mw power plant would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Impacts to solitude from proposed range improvements in the nondesignated area would include vehicle use related to construction of a one-half-mile pipeline, two reservoirs, three spring developments, 4 miles of fence, and a 1¼-mile primitive vehicle route improvement. Vehicle use for these facilities would total 42 days of vehicle use. Vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of these facilities would consist of 2 days every year for the pipeline, 4 days every 10 years for the reservoirs, 6 days every year for the spring developments, 3 days every 5 years for the fence, and 3 days every 10 years for the primitive vehicle route improvement. Thus, impacts to solitude from proposed range improvements in the designated portion would be low and temporary. The 9 miles of existing fences would require 10 days of vehicle use for inspection and maintenance. Impacts to solitude in this case, would be low and temporary.

Vehicle use related to existing sheepherding operations would continue to impair solitude at low levels of 20 days per year. Additionally, 2 days of vehicle use per year would occur for salt block placement.

Vehicle use and human activity related to casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude. The low use and low availability of fuelwood (30 vehicle trips per year and 1,320 acres are accessible) would have low impacts on solitude. Chainsaw activity would be very audible during fuelwood cutting. The 15 vehicle trips per year (38 visitor days) related to pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the designated portion of the WSA (9,790 acres) to motorized recreational access would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the unit.

As in the All Wilderness Alternative, projected mineral development of an open-pit sulphur mine in Cinnabar Canyon would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the designated portion on a total area of 420 acres.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the west quarter of the WSA, particularly around the Travertine Hot Springs area, impacts to primitive and unconfined types of recreation would be the same as those under the Proposed Action. It is anticipated that the geothermal development would occur in the nondesignated portion of the unit.

Special Features

For the designated portion of the WSA, the high probability of determining valid existing rights of existing mining claims would result in a projected open-pit sulphur mine (420 acres) in Cinnabar Canyon that would have the same impacts on special features such as pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and sage grouse as those impacts described in the Proposed Action.

Impacts to three springs and one meadow in the south half of the WSA which would be designated as wilderness would have the benefits to wetland values as those described in the Proposed Action.

Consequences

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the west quarter of the WSA (particularly around Travertine Hot Springs area), which would not be designated for wilderness, impacts to special features would be the same as those identified in the Proposed Action.

Impacts to wetland values in Clark Canyon which lies in the nondesignated portion would have the same benefits as those described in the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

Designation of the 9,790 acres as wilderness would primarily result in low benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly to naturalness and solitude due to the elimination of 400 annual visitor use days related to motor vehicle access, enhancement of wetland values of three springs and one meadow, the slight reduction of vehicle use related to grazing operations and maintenance of some grazing facilities, the prohibition of physical improvements to 1 3/4 miles of a primitive vehicle route in the designated area's southwest portion, and the prohibition of fuelwood cutting on 300 acres of accessible pinyon-juniper woodland. On the other hand, the high probability of determining valid existing rights for mining claims in Cinnabar Canyon would probably result in a 420-acre open-pit sulphur mine in this area. As a result, this operation would adversely impact naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features in a localized area of the unit.

On the 13,570 acres not designated as wilderness, there would be high adverse impacts to wilderness values from the projected development of a 40-acre geothermal power facility in the west quarter of the WSA, particularly around the Travertine Hot Springs area. In addition, there would be less significant adverse impacts to wilderness values from potential emergency needs for realignment of State Route 270 along a corridor 200 feet north of the boundary road. Fuelwood cutting, motorized vehicle access and physical improvements to a primitive vehicle route (1¼ miles) would be allowed resulting in additional adverse impacts to wilderness values of naturalness, and solitude.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation of 9,790 acres would result in the closure of approximately 42% of the WSA. Three miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 400 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be eliminated. This loss of use would primarily affect hunters who would either continue to utilize this portion of the WSA by primitive means such as foot travel or relocate to other areas including the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. Uses other than hunting including snowmobiling and sightseeing would primarily relocate to the nondesignated portion of the WSA or areas outside the WSA that offer similar opportunities. The Modesto Ridgerunners would be precluded from using the designated portion of the WSA for their annual 4-WD poker rally. Due to opportunities available outside the WSA on other public lands as well as increased use of the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, impacts on motorized recreation use including the Modesto Ridgerunners, would be minor.

Within the 13,570 acres not designated wilderness, 13 miles of primitive vehicle routes will remain open for motorized recreation use. Current motorized recreation use is anticipated to increase from the current 500 visitor days to a projected 700 visitor days due to a shift in use from the designated portion of the WSA. The Modesto Ridgerunners would continue to use the 13 miles of existing routes within the nondesignated portion of the WSA for their annual poker rally. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

The impacts on motorized recreation use would be minor due to opportunities outside the WSA as well as increased use of the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. While 400 visitor days would be eliminated from the designated area, an increase of 200 visitor days of motorized recreation use is projected for the nonwilderness portion.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Geothermal leasing, exploration, and development would be precluded on 9,790 acres within the WSA designated as wilderness. This area has a high potential for geothermal resources however development potential is only considered to be moderate. While approximately one-fourth of this area has pending geothermal lease applications, there is no development projected in this area due to the projected small size of the resource and lack of strong resource indications. Additionally, forecasts by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) indicate a lack of demand for new electric power sources. Therefore, impacts to geothermal resource development are negligible.

Within the 13,570 acres not designated as wilderness, geothermal leasing, exploration, and development could occur. A potential 10-Mw resource is projected for development in the Travertine Hot Springs area. There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

Precluding geothermal resource development on the 9,790 acres of the WSA designated wilderness would result in only a negligible impact with no projected development foregone. Geothermal exploration and development could occur within the remaining 13,570 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness which includes a potential 10-Mw resource. There would be no impact on geothermal resource development within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative potential geothermal resource development would occur in the 9,790-acre nonwilderness portion of the WSA near Travertine Hot Springs. The 40 acres of surface disturbance and 5 miles of road construction as a result of developing a 10-Mw resource could impact cultural sites. Continued motorized recreation use in the

nonwilderness portion of the WSA would result in 700 visitor days with little use occurring on existing routes. Impacts to cultural resources in an area of very high sensitivity would likely only be minor as a result of mitigation measures as described under Impacts on Cultural Resources for the Proposed Action.

For the remaining 13,570 acres a low positive benefit to cultural resources would result from closure of the area to motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

In the 9,790 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal resource development would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources. Surface inventories would be required to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts.

There would be a low positive benefit to cultural resources within the 13,570 acres designated wilderness.

Impacts on State Route 270 Realignment

The boundary of the Partial Wilderness Alternative along 3¼ miles of State Route 270 would be set back 200 feet from the roadway to allow a corridor for emergency realignment. The remaining 1¼ miles of roadway follows the boundary of the WSA adjacent to the nonwilderness portion and could be realigned into the WSA outside the present right-of-way up to a potential distance of 200 feet. Emergency conditions such as washouts along Clearwater Creek area not uncommon and often necessitate relocation of the road in order to maintain the primary access to Bodie State Historic Park. As a result of providing the 200-foot-wide corridor there would be no impacts on the realignment of State Route 270.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on the realignment of State Route 270. The Partial Wilderness Alternative boundary establishes a 200-foot-wide corridor along 3¼ miles of the roadway for reconstruction. The remaining 1¼ miles follow the WSA boundary along the nonwilderness portion and would not be impacted.

BODIE WSA
(CA-010-100)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
15,455 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 15,455 acres of the Bodie WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this proposal would occur from development of an open-pit mine and construction of a geothermal power facility.

Impact on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and none of the wilderness values on 15,455 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive types of recreation, and special features including scenic values, sensitive plants, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, and cultural values. In addition, the unit contains crucial deer and pronghorn fawning and crucial sage grouse nesting habitat. Impacts to wilderness values would include continued motor vehicle use which is low and expected to remain stable, a projected open-pit mine, and a projected geothermal power facility.

Naturalness

The continued use of motor vehicles on 18 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 26 acres of the WSA. The majority (14,355 acres) of the WSA would be designated as open to vehicle use. There is, however, little use off existing vehicle routes. The overall low recreation use and projected low levels of use related to motor vehicles (1,000 visitor use days) limit impairment to naturalness. Alteration of naturalness due to motor vehicle use is expected to remain minor and stable over the long term. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to Bodie State Historic Park visitors will view the WSA from the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA while in the park.

Interpretive facilities in the Bodie Bowl portion of the WSA would consist of interpretive signs and/or an interpretive brochure with post markers. Adverse impacts to naturalness would be marginal.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from livestock grazing would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies the problem areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

Surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, and development of gold in the Paramount Mine portion of the WSA would result in high adverse impacts to naturalness. An open-pit gold mine and associated facilities would disturb 420 acres of public land in addition to 8 miles of associated roads. The perception of naturalness would be altered on a 275-acre viewshed zone around the Paramount Mine area. Impacts to naturalness are expected to be significant due to the size and location of this development.

In the event geothermal development were to occur in the western quarter of the WSA, it is anticipated that development would not proceed any further than exploration which would result in 16 acres of surface

disturbance from the drilling of shallow and intermediate exploration wells. In addition, 5 miles of associated roads would be developed to access drill sites. Impacts to naturalness would be slight to moderately adverse during active operations. The sites would be rehabilitated upon termination of operations.

Proposed livestock grazing improvements would slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis in scattered areas of the WSA. Proposed facilities would include three spring developments scattered throughout the unit and three pipelines totaling 3½ miles in the northeast and southwest corners. The three spring improvements would disturb a total surface area of 75 square feet. The pipelines would result in a surface disturbance 3 feet wide and would be rehabilitated with native vegetation in 1 to 2 years. In addition, a 5-mile fence is proposed in the unit's south half. Some shrub removal would occur from fence construction. Overall, impacts to naturalness would be low.

Fuelwood harvesting of pinyon pine and juniper would have a marginal impact on naturalness. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting of dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 20 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Pinyon nut collection is expected to have no effect on naturalness since the nuts are collected from the pine cones after the cones have fallen to the surface. The nuts are removed from the cones on site and the cones are randomly returned to the surface.

Solitude

Occasional motor vehicle use on 18 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and in the majority of (14,355 acres) WSA which would be open to vehicle use would detract from the feeling of solitude. However, the low level of motor vehicle use, both present and projected (1,000 annual visits), would render these impacts to low levels.

Construction of interpretive signs and/or interpretive brochures and post markers in the Bodie Bowl would have little or no adverse impacts on solitude. At most, visitors attracted by the interpretive facilities would slightly impair opportunities for solitude.

Human activity associated with the anticipated open-pit gold mine would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude in viewshed zones of 275 acres around the Paramount Mine portion of the WSA. Human activity associated with the projected geothermal power facility would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude in portions of the west quarter of the WSA. Impacts would be visible on geothermal exploration sites--on 16 acres and along 5 miles of associated roads. The impacts would be temporary.

Construction and maintenance of all proposed range improvement projects would require vehicle use for 80 days during construction. Inspection and maintenance for these projects would require 6 days of vehicle use every year for the spring developments, 9 days every year for the pipeline, and

15 days every 5 years for the fence. The anticipated temporary use of vehicles for construction and the anticipated low use of vehicles for maintenance would have low impacts on solitude.

Impacts to solitude as a result of maintenance to existing grazing facilities would continue at their present low levels. Inspection and maintenance of the existing fence would require 8 days of vehicle use every 5 years and the exclosures would require 3 days of vehicle use every 5 years. Vehicle use related to salt block placement would require 2 days of vehicle use per year.

Vehicle use and human activity related to casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude. The low use and low availability of fuelwood (10 vehicle trips per year and 480 acres are accessible) would have low impacts on solitude. Chainsaw activity would be very audible during fuelwood cutting. The 10 vehicle trips per year (25 visitor days) related to pinyon nut collection would have low impacts to solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Projected mineral development related to the open-pit gold mine in the Paramount Mine area as well as projected geothermal exploration in portions of the WSA's west quarter would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 436 acres.

Special Features

A projected open-pit gold mine disturbing 420 acres of surface in the Paramount Mine area and geothermal exploration activity in the WSA's west quarter would have localized adverse impacts to mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse habitat. Habitat would be lost, forcing these animal species to relocate to other areas. In addition, the open-pit mine and geothermal exploration activity would adversely affect crucial deer fawning habitat in localized areas. Deer fawning would be displaced around these activities. Finally, geothermal exploration would have short-term adverse effects on pronghorn fawning habitat depending on exploration locations. Pronghorn fawning would be displaced around these activities.

Geothermal exploration activity would potentially impair cultural resources at the project locations. The predicted cultural sensitivity of the WSA is very high with most sites consisting of obsidian collection areas and pinyon collection sites. Prior to geothermal exploration the project area would be surveyed to identify and salvage surface and subsurface cultural resources.

Conclusion:

The primary impacts to wilderness values would originate from projected mineral development activities expected to occur in the Paramount Mine area and in portions of the WSA's west quarter. An open-pit mine and projected geothermal exploration would disturb 436 acres of surface and directly impair naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features, particularly crucial fawning habitat, of the WSA.

Consequences

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

All motorized recreation use would continue as prescribed in the Bodie-Coleville MFP with 14,355 acres designated as open and 1,100 acres in the Bodie Bowl designated as limited to existing routes and trails. The current 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use is expected to remain stable. Approximately 18 miles of existing routes and trails would remain open for continued use by hunters, sightseers, snowmobilers, hikers, and rockhounders. The Modesto Ridgerunners would continue to utilize existing routes and trails within the WSA for their annual 4-WD poker rally. Vehicle use of existing routes is low. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the WSA. Use will continue as prescribed in the Bodie-Coleville MFP and is projected to remain stable at the current 1,000 visitor days.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

The entire 15,455 acres within the WSA would be open to geothermal leasing, exploration, and development. There is a moderate potential for geothermal resources in the WSA, however, there is only a low development potential. While development of geothermal resources is not anticipated pending geothermal lease applications could lead to exploration activities in the western quarter of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. The entire WSA would be available for geothermal development however only exploration activities are anticipated.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Potential geothermal exploration in the western quarter of the WSA could potentially result in adverse impacts to cultural resources. A very high sensitivity for cultural resources is predicted for the WSA. The predominant site types are randomly scattered and typical of lithic procurement areas including obsidian collection sites and pinyon sites. The 16 acres of surface disturbance and 5 miles of road construction associated with geothermal exploration could impact cultural sites. Surface inventories would be conducted prior to submission of a plan of operations to determine mitigation measures including relocation or rerouting of facilities and salvage of sites, to minimize potential impacts. Geothermal exploration would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources as a result of implementing mitigation measures and the small area of surface disturbance involved. Although the WSA experiences 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use, very little use occurs off existing routes, therefore, impacts from continued motorized recreation use would be negligible.

Conclusion:

Surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal exploration would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources in areas of predicted very high sensitivity. Surface inventories to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts would be required.

Impacts on Crucial Deer and Pronghorn Antelope Fawning Habitat

The majority (approximately 65%) of the 15,455 acres within the WSA provides crucial fawning habitat for mule deer and pronghorn antelope. Development of a projected 420-acre open-pit gold mine along with 8 miles of associated roads would result in adverse impacts to crucial fawning habitat for both mule deer and pronghorn antelope in the Paramount Mine area in the northwest portion of the WSA. In addition to the direct loss of 420 acres of habitat, increased activity related to mining would displace both the mule deer and pronghorn antelope resulting in a long-term loss of fawning productivity on approximately 1,500 acres or 17% of the crucial fawning habitat available in the WSA.

Geothermal exploration in the western quarter of the WSA would include 16 acres of surface disturbance and the construction of 5 miles of roads. While there would be a direct loss of 16 acres of habitat, impacts associated with geothermal activities would be short term since the duration of exploration activities would be less than 5 years. Exploration activities would be restricted annually during fawning season to minimize impacts. Due to the short-term nature of the geothermal exploration activities as well as the limited area involved and mitigation measures to restrict activities, impacts to fawning habitats would be minor. Reclamation of exploration well pads and roads upon completion would contribute to returning the fawning habitat and productivity over the long term.

Continued motorized recreation use (1,000 visitor days) and livestock grazing (2,823 AUMs) would remain at current levels with no increases projected. Current impacts are very minor and are not anticipated to substantially increase in severity.

Conclusion:

Mineral development in the Paramount Mine area would result in the direct loss of 420 acres and a long-term loss of productivity representing 17% of the available fawning habitat. Geothermal development would result in only minor short-term impacts to crucial fawning habitat.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

The development of a 420-acre open-pit mine in the Paramount Mine area would lead to unavoidable adverse impacts to wilderness values particularly naturalness and solitude as well as crucial fawning habitat for mule deer and pronghorn antelope. Geothermal exploration activities would result in only minor, localized impacts to wilderness values including crucial fawning habitat. Development of range improvement projects would

result in only minor short-term, unavoidable adverse impacts from surface disturbances. Continued motorized recreation use would not result in any significant adverse impacts since use is projected to remain stable with only very little use occurring off the existing 18 miles of primitive vehicle routes.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the WSA there are many ongoing uses including motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, livestock grazing and wildlife management. Under the Proposed Action, projected open-pit mining in the Paramount Mine area in the northwest portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 420 acres. Additionally, mining activities would adversely impact the long-term productivity of an additional 1,500 acres of crucial fawning habitat. Geothermal exploration would result in primarily a short-term loss of productivity with only very minor impacts to long-term productivity as a result of rehabilitation efforts upon completion of exploration activities. For the remainder of the WSA, future development options would remain open and long-term productivity is not likely to be impacted. The objectives of the Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan would result in an anticipated enhancement of long-term productivity of riparian habitat.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Activities such as mining could create an irreversible commitment of the WSA's wilderness values on 420 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the mineral resource. Since geothermal exploration would disturb only 16 acres and it is not anticipated to lead to development of geothermal activities, no associated irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are projected.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

15,455 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 15,455 acres of the Bodie WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to wilderness values and special features including mule deer, pronghorn antelope and sage grouse as well as the prohibition of motorized recreation use and geothermal exploration.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 15,455 acres of the Bodie WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and all values would be protected by legislative mandate. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features consisting of sensitive plant candidates, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, waterfowl, and scenic values would be retained except for areas where the determination of valid existing rights of existing mining claims precludes wilderness protection.

Naturalness

There would be a low, positive effect on naturalness due primarily to the closure of the area to vehicles, even though current vehicular use of the area is low; i.e., 1,000 visitor use days annually. Eighteen miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed to vehicles, and used as hiking and equestrian trails. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to and from Bodie State Historic Park would view the WSA from the Bodie Bowl portion of the unit.

Proposed interpretive facilities would be prohibited in the designated area. Impacts to naturalness would be marginally enhanced. Interpretive facilities would be accommodated outside the designated area along major roads.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from livestock grazing would continue until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identified the problem areas and prescribed specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

A high probability for determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims near Paramount Mine would result in an open-pit gold mine totaling 420 acres in addition to 8 miles of associated roads. Impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to naturalness as a result of foregoing geothermal exploration opportunities in the west quarter of the WSA. Approximately 16 acres of land and 5 miles of associated roads would remain in its natural state due to prohibition of geothermal development.

Impacts to naturalness under this alternative from the proposed range improvements would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

A slight positive impact to naturalness would occur as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the WSA. The low demand (20 cords per year) would be accommodated in areas adjoining the unit. Pinyon nut collection would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. There would be no impacts to naturalness under this alternative as under the Proposed Action. Approximately 13 visitor use days per year would occur by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas.

Consequences

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (1,000 visitor use days annually), solitude would be enhanced slightly.

Prohibition of interpretive signs and/or interpretive brochures and post markers in the Bodie Bowl would have little or no positive impacts to solitude. At most, a lack of interpretive facilities would reduce concentrations of visitors at these areas.

A high probability for determination of valid existing rights of existing mining claims in the Paramount Mine area would result in an open-pit gold mine in this area. Impacts to solitude in this area would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action.

There would be a benefit to solitude as a result of foregoing geothermal exploration opportunities in the WSA's west quarter. Approximately 16 acres would remain undeveloped and inactive, thus enhancing the area's solitude.

Impacts to solitude from construction of all proposed range improvements would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of proposed and existing projects would be the same as the Proposed Action except that there would be a reduction in vehicle use for fence maintenance--from 26 days every 5 years for all fences to 6 days every 5 years. Thus, 20 days of vehicle use would be foregone, slightly enhancing solitude. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback. Vehicles would be used to drop off fence materials at the project site. In addition, vehicle use related to salt block placement would be reduced 2 days per year. Salt block placement would be done on horseback.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting would eliminate human activity, associated vehicle use, and chainsaw noise, thus enhancing solitude slightly. Demand for fuelwood is low. Pinyon nut collection would continue (13 visitor days per year) without the use of vehicles, thus enhancing solitude slightly.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the WSA to motorized recreational use would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the unit.

Projected mineral development of an open-pit gold mine would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation on a total of 420 acres. This limitation would occur in the Paramount Mine area.

The prohibition of geothermal exploration would enhance primitive and unconfined types of recreation on 16 acres of public land, that would remain undeveloped along the WSA's west quarter.

Special Features

The projected open-pit gold mine in the Paramount Mine area would have the same impacts on special features as described in the Proposed Action. The prohibition of geothermal exploration would benefit pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and sage grouse habitat. Approximately 16 acres of land would remain undeveloped, additionally benefiting crucial mule deer and pronghorn antelope fawning habitat as well as any cultural values located in the area. Cultural sites and wildlife habitat would remain undisturbed.

Conclusion:

The net effect of the management actions under the All Wilderness Alternative would be a slight to, perhaps, minor enhancement of the long-term protection to wilderness values. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use, prohibition of geothermal exploration, and a decrease in vehicle use associated with fuelwood cutting and pinyon nut collection, would provide minor benefits to wilderness values. Foregone geothermal exploration and any unforeseen development would provide the greatest benefits to wilderness. The high probability of valid existing rights determination for mining claims in the Paramount Mine area would lead to the development of an open-pit gold mine. As a result, wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and special features would be adversely impacted in the Paramount Mine area.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation would close the entire 15,455 acres within the WSA to motorized recreation use eliminating 1,000 visitor days per year. Eighteen miles of existing routes and trails would be closed to motorized recreation use. Opportunities on public lands outside the WSA could absorb the majority of this displaced use. However, due to the relatively large number of users displaced, opportunities could be limited. Additionally, relocation of the Modesto Ridgerunners' annual 4-WD poker rally would be restricted due to the lack of availability of continuous routes. Overall the impacts on motorized recreation use would be moderate.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would close the entire 15,455-acre WSA and eliminate 1,000 visitor days. Due to the relatively large number of displaced users including the Modesto Ridgerunners' 4-WD poker rally this would result in a moderate impact on motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Geothermal leasing exploration and development would be prohibited within the entire 15,455-acre WSA. While there is a moderate potential for geothermal resources in the WSA the development potential is considered to be low. Projected exploration activities in the western quarter of the WSA would be foregone. However, impacts on geothermal development would be negligible due to the development potential and the lack of demand forecasted for additional energy sources by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985).

Consequences

Conclusion:

There would only be negligible impacts to geothermal resource development. Exploration in the western quarter of the WSA would be foregone. However, no development is projected within the WSA due to only a moderate potential for geothermal resources with a low development potential.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Wilderness designation of the WSA would likely result in slight positive benefits to potential cultural resources within the WSA's areas of predicted very high sensitivity for cultural sites. Geothermal exploration involving 16 acres of surface disturbance and 5 miles of road construction would be precluded as would 1,000 visitor days per year of continued motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

There would be low positive benefits to cultural resources due to precluding geothermal exploration and continued motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Crucial Deer and Pronghorn Antelope Fawning Habitat

Wilderness designation would result in minor positive benefits to crucial mule deer and pronghorn antelope fawning habitat as a result of precluding projected geothermal exploration and eliminating 1,000 visitor days of motorized recreation use.

Mineral development in the Paramount Mine area would continue as described under the Proposed Action as a result of an anticipated determination of valid existing rights. Impacts on the fawning habitat from mining would be long term in nature resulting in the direct loss of 420 acres of habitat and a long-term loss of productivity on approximately 1,500 acres due to increased activity associated with the projected mining. This represents 17% of the available fawning habitat in the WSA.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation would result in minor positive benefits to crucial fawning habitat due to the elimination of 1,000 visitor days and preclusion of geothermal exploration. However, projected open-pit mining would occur whether the area is designated wilderness or not. Mineral development in the Paramount Mine area would result in the direct loss of 420 acres of fawning habitat and a long-term loss of productivity representing 17% of the available fawning habitat.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,945 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
8,510 Acres Nonwilderness

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would designate 6,945 acres as wilderness with the remaining 8,510 acres of the WSA as nonwilderness. The primary impacts under this proposal relate to beneficial and adverse effects on wilderness values, mineral withdrawal, motorized vehicle access prohibition, and prohibitions on construction of interpretive facilities.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the Partial Wilderness designation, 6,945 acres would receive special legislative protection for all wilderness values. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features consisting of mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, waterfowl, scenic values, and cultural values would be retained except for areas where the determination of valid existing rights on existing mining claims precludes wilderness protection.

Wilderness values on the remaining 8,510 acres would be subjected to effects of multiple use resource management including mineral resource development, motorized recreational access, geothermal exploration, and casual use related to fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection.

Naturalness

There would be a slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of closure of 6,945 acres including 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes which would eliminate 450 visitor use days annually which are related to motor vehicle use. It is anticipated that between 100,000 to 125,000 visitors to Bodie State Historic Park would view the WSA from the Bodie Bowl portion of the unit.

Impacts to naturalness from prohibition of proposed interpretive facilities in the designated area (the Bodie Bowl portion) would be the same as those described in the All Wilderness Alternative.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from livestock grazing would continue in the designated area until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies the problem areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

Although no projected mineral activity is anticipated for the designated area, naturalness would remain stable or be enhanced should any unforeseen mineral development, associated with valid existing rights, occur.

Livestock use would continue to be allotted at 1,270 AUMs within the designated portion of the WSA. Proposed range improvements scattered throughout the designated area would have low impacts on naturalness.

Consequences

The spring development in the northwest corner would disturb a surface of 25 square feet and would be observable up to a radial distance of 200 feet. The 1-mile pipeline near Geiger Grade Road would have a surface disturbance of 3 feet wide along its length and would be rehabilitated with native plants in 1 to 2 years. The 3-mile fence, proposed in the central part, would entail some shrub removal.

Approximately 180 acres of accessible pinyon-juniper woodland would be prohibited for fuelwood cutting in the designated portion of the WSA. A low positive impact to naturalness would occur as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the designated area. The low demand (8 cords per year) would be accommodated in areas adjoining the unit. Pinyon nut collection would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. The impacts to naturalness would be the same under this alternative as under the Proposed Action. Approximately 5 visitor use days per year would occur by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas. Pinyon nuts are available in areas adjoining the unit.

The continued use of motor vehicles in the nondesignated area on 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes would impair the perception of naturalness on 22 acres of the WSA. The overall low recreation use and projected low levels of use (750 visitor days annually) would only slightly impact naturalness.

Some localized impacts to riparian habitats from livestock grazing would continue in the nondesignated area until the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan identifies the problem areas and prescribes specific corrective measures. Impacts to naturalness are localized and include soil compaction, a reduction of the water table, an establishment of xeric shrubs, and stream bank erosion. The plan would be completed in 3 to 5 years.

Surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery, and development of gold in the Paramount Mine area which lies in the nondesignated area would have the same impacts on naturalness as in the Proposed Action.

Impacts to naturalness in the nondesignated area from geothermal development would be the same as the Proposed Action.

Within the nonwilderness area, cattle would continue to be allotted at 1,553 AUMs. Proposed projects in this area would have low impacts on naturalness. The two proposed spring developments near Paramount Mine and Dry Lakes would disturb a total of 50 square feet. Each spring development would be observable up to a radial distance of 200 feet. The two pipelines totaling 2¼ miles on Dry Lakes Plateau would result in a surface disturbance of 3 feet wide along the entire length. The surface disturbance would be rehabilitated with native vegetation in 1 to 2 years. The 2 miles of proposed fence would entail some shrub removal.

Approximately 300 acres of pinyon pine and juniper would be accessible and available for casual use of fuelwood cutting and noncommercial pinyon nut collection in the nondesignated portion of the WSA. Impacts to naturalness

would be low. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting of dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 12 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Impacts to naturalness from pinyon nut collection would be the same as those described in the Proposed Action.

Solitude

Opportunities for solitude would be slightly improved on 6,945 acres in the designated portion of the WSA as a result of closing the area to motor vehicle use. Due to the area's low vehicle use (450 visitor use days annually), solitude would be only slightly enhanced.

Impacts to solitude from prohibition of interpretive facilities in the designated area would be the same as those under the All Wilderness Alternative.

Although no projected mineral development activity is anticipated in the designated area, solitude would remain stable or be enhanced should any unforeseen development associated with valid existing rights occur.

Vehicle use related to construction of proposed range improvements in the designated area would have low adverse impacts on solitude. It is anticipated that vehicle use would be required for construction of a 1-mile pipeline, one spring development, and a 3-mile fence. Approximately 30 days of vehicle use would be required to construct these facilities. Inspection and maintenance of these facilities would have low impacts on solitude. It is anticipated that vehicle use would be needed 3 days every year for the pipeline, 2 days every year for the spring development, and 2 days of vehicle use every 5 years to transport fence materials to the project site. Actual fence repair would be done by personnel on horseback. Overall, the anticipated low use of vehicles for construction and maintenance of proposed range improvements would be low and transient.

Impacts to solitude as a result of maintenance to the existing exclosures in the designated area would continue at their present low levels. Inspection and maintenance would require 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years for the exclosure in order to transport materials to the project site. Fence maintenance would be done by personnel on horseback.

Motorized recreational vehicle use in the nondesignated portion would continue on 14 miles of primitive vehicle routes used by the Modesto Ridgerunners for their annual poker rally in addition to use by hunters, snowmobilers, sightseers, and rockhounders. Impacts to solitude would be slightly adverse due to low visitation and a long season of use. Motor vehicle use is projected to increase from 550 visitor use days to 750 per year.

Impacts to solitude from surface disturbances and construction activities associated with the exploration, discovery, and development of gold in the nondesignated portion (Paramount Mine) would be the same as the Proposed Action. A 420-acre open-pit mine and 8 miles of associated roads would be developed in the area.

Consequences

Impacts to solitude from geothermal exploration activity in the WSA's west quarter, which lies in the nondesignated area, would be the same as under the Proposed Action.

Impacts to solitude from proposed range improvements in the nondesignated area would include vehicle use related to construction of two pipelines totaling 2¼ miles, two spring developments, and 2 miles of fence. Vehicle use for these facilities would total 45 days of vehicle use. Vehicle use related to inspection and maintenance of these facilities would consist of 6 days every year for the pipelines, 4 days every year for the spring developments, and 2 days every 5 years for the fence. Thus, impacts to solitude from proposed range improvements in the designated portion would be low and temporary. The 4 miles of existing fences would require 8 days of vehicle use for inspection and maintenance and the exclosure would require 1 day of vehicle use every 5 years for inspection and maintenance. Impacts to solitude in this case, would be low and temporary.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting on 180 acres of accessible acres of pinyon-juniper woodland would eliminate human activity, chainsaw noise, and associated vehicle use (4 vehicle trips per year). Demand for fuelwood is low. Pinyon nut collection would continue (5 visitor days per year) without the use of vehicles, thus enhancing overall solitude very slightly.

Vehicle use and human activity related to casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collection in the designated area would have low impacts on solitude. The low use and low availability of fuelwood (6 vehicle trips per year and 300 acres are accessible) would have low impacts on solitude. Chainsaw activity would be very audible during fuelwood cutting. The 10 vehicle trips per year (25 visitor days) related to pinyon nut collection would have low impacts on solitude.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the designated portion of the WSA (6,945 acres) to motorized recreational access would slightly benefit primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Wilderness users would not be encumbered by vehicle use in the unit.

As in the Proposed Action, projected mineral development of an open-pit gold mine near Paramount Mine would adversely limit opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the nondesignated portion on a total area of 420 acres.

In the event geothermal exploration were to occur in the west quarter of the WSA, impacts to primitive and unconfined types of recreation would be the same as those under the Proposed Action. It is anticipated that the geothermal development would occur in the nondesignated portion of the unit.

Special Features

For the nondesignated portion of the WSA, impacts to special features from a projected open-pit gold mine near Paramount Mine would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action.

For the nondesignated portion of the WSA, impacts to special features from any projected geothermal activity in the WSA's west quarter would be the same as those described under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

Designation of the 6,945 acres as wilderness would primarily result in low positive benefits to the area's wilderness values particularly to naturalness and solitude due to the elimination of 450 annual visitor use days related to motor vehicle access, a slight reduction of vehicle use related to grazing operations and maintenance, and the prohibition of fuelwood cutting on 180 acres of accessible pinyon-juniper woodland.

On the 8,510 acres not designated as wilderness there would be high adverse impacts to wilderness values from projected development of a 420-acre open-pit gold mine near the Paramount Mine area. In addition, there would be some temporary impacts to wilderness values from projected geothermal exploration on 16 acres of public lands in the WSA's west quarter. Very slight adverse impacts to wilderness values would occur from continued motor vehicle use related to recreation, fuelwood cutting, and pinyon nut collection.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation of 6,945 acres would result in the closure of approximately 45% of the WSA to motorized recreation use. Four miles of primitive vehicle routes would be closed and 450 visitor days of motorized recreation use would be eliminated. This loss would primarily affect hunters who would either continue to utilize this portion of the WSA by primitive means such as foot travel or relocate to other areas including the nonwilderness portion. Uses other than hunting including snowmobiling and sightseeing would primarily relocate to the nondesignated portion of the WSA or areas outside the WSA that offer similar opportunities. The Modesto Ridgerunners would be precluded from using the 4 miles of existing primitive routes in the wilderness portion of the WSA. Due to opportunities to utilize other public lands outside the WSA or relocated use into the nonwilderness portion of the WSA, impacts on motorized recreation use including the Modesto Ridgerunners' 4-WD poker rally would only be minor.

In the nondesignated portion of the WSA all motorized recreation uses would continue with use projected to increase from the current 550 visitor days to 750 visitor days. Fourteen miles of primitive vehicle routes would remain open. The Modesto Ridgerunners would continue to use the existing routes in this portion of the WSA for their 4-WD poker rally. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

Impacts on motorized recreation use in the wilderness portion of the WSA would only be minor due to opportunities outside the WSA as well as increased use of the nonwilderness portion of the WSA. While 450 visitor days would be eliminated from the designated area, an increase

in the nondesignated portion from the current 550 visitor days to a projected 750 visitor days would limit overall impacts to motorized recreation use.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Wilderness designation of 6,945 acres within the WSA would preclude geothermal leasing, exploration and development. However, there is only a moderate potential for geothermal resources with a low development potential. No geothermal activity is projected within the WSA. There would be only a very minimal impact on geothermal resource development in the long term should the need to explore ever occur.

The remaining 7,410 acres not designated wilderness would be available for geothermal leasing, exploration and development. Due to the moderate potential for geothermal resources and only a low potential for development, the only activities projected would be limited exploration. There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA.

Conclusion:

There would be only a very minimal impact on geothermal resource development as a result of wilderness designation of 6,945 acres. Within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA there would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. Projected exploration activities could occur.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, potential geothermal resource development would occur within the 8,510 acres not designated wilderness. The 16 acres of surface disturbance and 5 miles of road construction associated with geothermal exploration could potentially impact cultural sites. Motorized recreation use in the nonwilderness portion of the WSA would increase from the current 550 visitor days to a projected 750 visitor days with little use occurring off existing routes. Impacts to cultural resources would likely only be minor as a result of mitigation measures as described under the Proposed Action.

For the remaining 6,945 acres designated wilderness there would be a low positive benefit to cultural resources due to closure of the area to motorized recreation use (450 visitor days)..

Conclusion:

In the 8,510 acres of the WSA not designated wilderness, surface-disturbing activities associated with geothermal exploration would likely only result in minor impacts to cultural resources. Surface inventories would be required to develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts.

There would be a low positive benefit to cultural resources within the 6,945 acres designated wilderness.

Impacts on Crucial Deer and Pronghorn Antelope Fawning Habitat

Wilderness designation of 6,945 acres within the WSA as wilderness would result in only minor positive benefit by eliminating 450 visitor days of motorized recreation use.

Development of minerals and geothermal resource would occur on the 8,510 acres not designated wilderness as described under the Proposed Action. Mining activities would result in a direct loss of 420 acres of habitat and a long-term loss of productivity on approximately 1,500 acres. This represents a loss of 17% of the WSA's available fawning habitat. Geothermal exploration would only result in short-term minor impacts. Motorized recreation use and livestock grazing would continue to be very minor with no changes anticipated.

Conclusion:

There would be only a minor positive benefit to crucial fawning habitat within the 6,945 acres designated wilderness. Mining activity within the nondesignated portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of 420 acres of habitat and a long-term loss of productivity on 1,500 acres representing 17% of the available fawning habitat in the WSA. Geothermal development would only result in minor short-term impacts to crucial fawning habitat.

MASONIC MOUNTAINS WSA
(CA-010-102)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,600 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 6,600 acres of the Masonic Mountains WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this proposal relate to the impacts on wilderness values as a result of mining activities, geothermal development, and continued motorized recreation use, as well as potential community expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation, therefore, none of the wilderness values would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and special features including two species of sensitive plant and crucial deer fawning habitat.

Naturalness

Motorized recreation use (450 visitor days) would continue on approximately 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and trails and would impair the perception of naturalness on 10 acres of the WSA. The WSA would be designated as open to vehicular use, however use off existing routes is low resulting in negligible impacts to naturalness other than maintaining the presence of existing routes.

Exclosure fencing along portions of Rock Springs Canyon totaling one-quarter mile and at a spring in the McMillian Spring area would have a localized, short-term, minor adverse impact on naturalness due to visual contrasts. However, since the purpose of the fence is to rehabilitate degraded riparian areas, the long-term effect of the fences would result in a positive benefit to the naturalness of the canyon along the southeast boundary of the WSA as vegetation becomes reestablished.

Surface disturbances and construction activities associated with exploration and development of an open-pit gold mine in the extreme northeast portion of the WSA in the Masonic area would result in a direct loss of naturalness within the 145-acre project site. The mining activities and 4 miles of roads would only impair the perception of naturalness over approximately 300 acres of the WSA. The adverse impacts to naturalness would be locally significant, however the mining activity is topographically isolated from the majority of the WSA since it is separated from over 95% of the WSA by the intervening ridgeline of the Bodie Hills. The overall impacts of mining on the WSA would be minor.

Geothermal exploration and development in the southwest portion of the WSA would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 40 acres due to surface disturbance related to a 10-Mw geothermal generating facility and associated well pads, pipelines, roads, and powerlines. The perception of naturalness would be altered within approximately a 700-acre viewshed. The remainder of the WSA would be topographically screened from the geothermal development. Impacts to naturalness would generally be localized with only minor impacts overall.

Proposed livestock grazing improvements would slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis in the central and western portions of the WSA. One spring development proposed for the northwest corner of the WSA would include placement of a small trough and would result in 25 square feet of surface disturbance. Due to its small size the spring development would only result in negligible impacts. Four reservoirs would be constructed resulting in approximately one-quarter acre of surface disturbance for each project. The perception of naturalness would be impaired over an area of approximately 10 acres for each reservoir. Maintenance of the four reservoirs on a 10-year cycle would continue to maintain the unnatural conditions on a total of 1 acre with the perception of naturalness impaired on a total of approximately 40 acres.

Fuelwood harvesting of pinyon pine and juniper would have a marginal impact on naturalness. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 40 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps

and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Pinyon nut collection is expected to have no effect on naturalness since the nuts are collected from the pine cones after the cones have fallen to the surface. The nuts are removed from the cones on site and the cones are randomly returned to the surface. The 20 vehicle trips associated with fuelwood harvesting and 15 vehicle trips for pinyon nut collecting would minimally contribute to maintaining the 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes in an unnatural condition.

Should 120 acres in the southwest corner of the WSA be granted to the Bridgeport Indian Colony for residential and commercial development to meet future expansion needs, a direct loss of naturalness would occur on the entire 120 acres. Due to the linear nature of the parcel and its location along the gentle lower slopes the perception of naturalness would be impaired throughout approximately a 700-acre viewshed. This would be the same 700-acre viewshed adversely affected by geothermal resource development.

Solitude

Continued motorized recreation use (450 visitor days) will maintain the existing level of solitude which has been diminished in the vicinity of the 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes as a result of current vehicular use. No increases are projected for motorized recreation use which is anticipated to remain stable. This low level of use would render these impacts to low levels.

Rehabilitation efforts along Rock Springs Canyon including exclosure fencing and reestablishment of native vegetation would require the use of two vehicles over a 4-day period. However this vehicle use would occur along the primitive vehicle route that bounds the southeast portion of the WSA and would only intrude less than 100 feet into the WSA. Since this use would only occur over a 4-day period and basically remain within the close proximity of an existing route with continued use, the impacts to solitude would be negligible. The spring rehabilitation along the northern boundary of the WSA in the McMillian Spring area would only require the use of one vehicle for 3 days and would remain on or within 200 feet of existing primitive vehicle routes. Again, the temporary nature of the vehicle use would result in insignificant impacts on solitude.

Mining operations and construction activities associated with the 140-acre open-pit mining development in the extreme northeastern portion of the WSA, would adversely impact a visitor's opportunities for solitude within the approximately 300-acre viewshed zone around the mine. This loss of solitude would occur only in the vicinity of the mining activity and not affect the majority of the WSA.

Geothermal exploration and development activities on 40 acres would adversely affect solitude within a 700-acre area surrounding the geothermal facilities and operations. Upon completion of facility and resource development including drilling and construction of a 10-Mw power generating plant, solitude would be minimally impacted with major disruption occurring only intermittently.

Consequences

Construction and maintenance of proposed livestock facilities including one spring development and construction of four small reservoirs, would impact solitude periodically for each project. The spring development would disrupt solitude as a result of using a vehicle for 5 days for construction and 2 days per year for maintenance. This use would occur primarily along the northwest boundary of the WSA with vehicle use penetrating the WSA no more than 100 feet. Construction of four reservoirs throughout the western and central portion of the WSA would each require 8 days of vehicle use. Maintenance of the reservoirs would require a total of 8 days of vehicle use every 10 years. While construction of the proposed facilities would cause a localized impact to solitude along the primitive vehicle routes for access and within the immediate project area, vehicle use for maintenance would only negligibly impact solitude due to the low level and intermittent nature of the use. Continued maintenance of 3 miles of fence requiring 6 days of vehicle use every 5 years and two spring developments requiring 4 days of vehicle use annually would continue to slightly impact solitude.

Vehicle use and human activity associated with casual fuelwood cutting and pinyon nut collecting would have only minor local impacts on solitude. The low use (20 vehicle trips) and limited availability of fuelwood (40 cords) would only locally disturb solitude within a 1,000-acre area on an intermittent basis. Chainsaw activity would be very audible. The 15 vehicle trips for pinyon nut collecting would only marginally impact solitude on the same 1,000 acres due to the infrequent occurrence of use.

Development of 120 acres along the southwest boundary should it be granted to the Bridgeport Indian Colony for residential and commercial use would result in a loss of solitude within a 700-acre area. Adverse impacts would result from construction activities as well as future every day use.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited on 140 acres as a result of mining activity in the northeast portion of the WSA as well as by geothermal development on 40 acres in the southwest portion of the WSA. As a result of these activities, there would only be a minor impact on primitive and unconfined recreation since these activities would occur near the boundary and would only affect a small portion of the WSA. Continued low levels of motorized recreation use (450 visitors) would occur primarily on 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes and would only marginally affect opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Development of 120 acres along the southwest boundary of the WSA for the Bridgeport Indian Colony expansion would also limit opportunities for solitude.

Special Features

The special features of the WSA, crucial deer fawning habitat and two populations of candidate species of plants for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Threatened and Endangered Plant List (Phacelia monoensis and Eriogonum ampullaceum) would not likely be impacted as a result of activities within the WSA under the Proposed Action. The habitats for these special features are isolated from any of the proposed surface-disturbing developments and would be retained.

Conclusion

On an overall basis there would be a minor impact to wilderness values throughout the 6,600-acre Masonic Mountains WSA. Localized impacts near the northwest and southwest boundaries from mining activity and geothermal development would result in a direct loss of naturalness on 180 acres and impair the perception of naturalness and solitude on a total of 1,000 acres. Future residential and commercial development for the Bridgeport Indian Colony on 120 acres of public land within the WSA would result in a direct loss of naturalness and adversely impact the perception of naturalness and solitude throughout the southwest portion. Continued motorized recreation use, fuelwood harvesting, pinyon nut collecting, and construction and maintenance of livestock facilities and wildlife projects would result in only negligible to minor local impacts. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be limited primarily along the boundary of the WSA in areas of mining activity, geothermal development, expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony and continued vehicle use. Special features including sensitive plants and crucial deer fawning habitat would be retained.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

All motorized recreation use would continue throughout the 6,600-acre WSA. The Bodie-Coleville MFP designates the area as open to motor vehicle use. Current motorized recreation use totals 450 visitor days per year and includes approximately 200 visitor days of snowmobiling as well as 150 visitor days of general sightseeing and hunting. The Modesto Ridgerunners account for 100 visitor days with their annual 4-WD poker rally. The majority of vehicle use within the WSA occurs on 4 miles of existing vehicle routes with vehicle use off existing routes being low. Motorized recreation use in the WSA is mostly by local individuals and is expected to remain stable. There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the WSA. The current 450 visitor use days per year are expected to remain stable.

Impacts on Mineral Development

Under the Proposed Action there would be no impacts to mineral development as the entire 6,600 acres within the WSA would remain open to mineral entry under the appropriate laws and regulations. All potential resources would be available for development. With approximately 21 mining claims in the eastern portion of the WSA and a moderate potential for metallic minerals in the northeast, development of a medium-sized open-pit mine (145 acres) is anticipated. Along the northeast boundary there is a moderate potential for sand and gravel with a high development potential. A projected 10-acre sand and gravel extraction is projected for the northeast corner of the WSA.

Consequences

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on mineral development. An open-pit gold mine and a sand and gravel operation are anticipated for development within the WSA.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

The entire 6,600 acres within the WSA would be open for geothermal leasing, exploration, and development. The WSA has a predominantly moderate potential for geothermal resource with the southwest portion considered to have a high potential with a moderate development potential. Development of a 10-Mw low temperature geothermal resource is projected for the southwest portion of the WSA. There would be no impacts on potential geothermal development.

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on geothermal resource development. The entire WSA would be available for exploration and development including a projected 10-Mw low temperature resource.

Impacts on Potential Bridgeport Indian Colony Expansion

Public lands within the WSA would be available for grant to the Bridgeport Indian Colony under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. The Indian Colony has expressed interest in 120 acres in the southwest portion of the WSA for future residential and commercial uses to meet their projected long-term expansion needs.

Conclusion:

There would be no impact on potential expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony to meet their future needs.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

An open-pit gold mine on 140 acres and geothermal development on an additional 40 acres would lead to unavoidable adverse impacts to wilderness values as a result of surface-disturbing activities. Development of livestock grazing projects would result in only minor short-term impacts on approximately 4 acres from surface disturbance. Construction activities related to potential community expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony could result in unavoidable impacts to wilderness values in the southwest portion of the WSA. Continued motorized recreation use as well as vehicular use for other activities would not result in any significant adverse impacts since projected use would remain stable and be confined primarily to 4 miles of primitive vehicle routes.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

If the WSA is not designated wilderness, all present short-term uses would continue. For the Masonic Mountains WSA there are many ongoing uses including motorized recreation, hunting, hiking, livestock grazing and

wildlife habitat management. Under the Proposed Action, open-pit mining and geothermal development would result in a direct loss of long-term productivity on 180 acres. For the remainder of the WSA, future development options would remain open and long-term productivity is not likely to be impacted. Rehabilitation of one spring and portions of the riparian habitat along Rock Springs Canyon is anticipated to improve deer habitat and fawning productivity over the long term.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Activities such as mining and geothermal development could create an irretrievable commitment of the WSA's wilderness values on 180 acres as well as an irretrievable commitment of the mineral and geothermal resource. Throughout the remainder of the WSA no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are projected.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,600 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 6,600 acres of the Masonic Mountains WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to the protection of wilderness values and the prohibition of motorized recreation use, mineral development and geothermal development, as well as potential expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony within the WSA.

Impact on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 6,600 acres of the Masonic Mountains WSA would be designated wilderness. All wilderness values within the WSA would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. Wilderness values of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features including two sensitive plant species and crucial deer fawning habitat would be retained.

Naturalness

There would be a slight, positive benefit to naturalness in the WSA as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. The current low level of use (450 visitor days) would be eliminated and the 4 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would slowly rehabilitate naturally.

Exclosure fencing and reestablishment of native plants along Rock Springs Canyon and one spring in the McMillian Spring area would result in localized short-term, minor adverse impacts. However, as described under the Proposed Action, there would be a long-term positive benefit in the rehabilitation of degraded riparian areas.

Consequences

Mining activities and geothermal resource development would be precluded under the All Wilderness Alternative. There would be significant benefits to naturalness in the 300 acres in which naturalness would have been either lost or impaired due to mining in the northeast portion of the WSA. In the southwest portion of the WSA, there would also be significant benefits to naturalness on the 1,000 acres in which naturalness would have been either lost or impaired due to geothermal resource development. Lands that would have been affected by these activities would remain in their natural state.

Impacts to naturalness due to proposed livestock grazing projects would only slightly impair naturalness on a localized basis in the central and western portions of the WSA as described under the Proposed Action. The perception of naturalness would be impaired on approximately 40 acres due to one spring development and four reservoirs.

There would be a marginal positive benefit to naturalness as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the WSA. There would be no evidence of fuelwood cutting such as limbed wood or cut stumps. The low demand (40 cords) would be accommodated outside the WSA. Pinyon nut collecting would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. There would be no impacts to naturalness as a result of collecting pinyon nuts under this alternative as described under the Proposed Action. Approximately 19 visitor days per year would occur by pinyon nut gatherers who would walk to collection areas.

Wilderness designation would prohibit granting 120 acres along the southwest boundary of the WSA for expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony. Potential residential and commercial development would be precluded resulting in a positive benefit to naturalness not only on the 120 acres but within the entire 700-acre viewshed in which the perception of naturalness would have been impaired.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude within the WSA as a result of prohibiting motorized recreation use. The current 450 visitor days of vehicle use would be eliminated. However, due to the low level of use which is primarily occurring on 4 miles of existing routes, this would only enhance solitude slightly within the WSA.

Solitude would only be temporarily disrupted by vehicle use over a total of 7 days for rehabilitation of both a spring in the McMillian Spring area and portions of Rock Springs Canyon. As described under the Proposed Action, the impacts to solitude would be insignificant.

As a result of foregoing mining activity and geothermal development under the All Wilderness Alternative, solitude would be retained. There would be a significant benefit to solitude on both the 300 acres in the northeast portion of the WSA affected by mining activity, and the 700 acres in the southwest portion of the WSA affected by geothermal development.

Impacts to solitude as a result of the construction and maintenance of proposed livestock grazing projects and maintenance of existing facilities would only negligibly impact solitude in the vicinity of the project sites and along the primitive vehicle routes used for access on an intermittent basis as described under the Proposed Action. Livestock improvement projects would be the same under both the All Wilderness Alternative and the Proposed Action.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting would eliminate human activity, associated vehicle use, and chainsaw noise, only enhancing solitude slightly. The low use (20 vehicle trips) and limited availability of fuelwood (40 cords) foregone would only result in localized benefits to solitude. Pinyon nut collecting would continue however the elimination of 15 vehicle trips associated with collecting would also result in slight localized benefits to solitude.

By prohibiting development of potential residential and commercial uses on 120 acres along the southwest boundary of the WSA for expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony, solitude would be preserved within the surrounding 700-acre viewshed.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use would slightly increase opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation throughout the WSA. Prohibiting mining activity on 140 acres in the northwest portion of the WSA, geothermal development of 40 acres in the southwest portion of the WSA, and expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony on 120 acres would increase opportunities primarily along the boundaries of the WSA.

Special Features

The special features of the WSA, crucial deer fawning habitat and two populations of sensitive plants (*Phacelia monoensis* and *Eriogonum ampullaceum*) would not be threatened by activities occurring within the WSA under the Proposed Action. By prohibiting these activities under the All Wilderness Alternative, the special features would only be slightly enhanced.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation of the entire 6,600 acres within the Masonic Mountains WSA would result in positive benefits to the wilderness values. Naturalness and solitude would be significantly retained locally by prohibiting mining activities that would affect 300 acres and geothermal development affecting 700 acres. Potential expansion of the Bridgeport Indian Colony within the WSA would be precluded retaining wilderness values within the surrounding 700 acres. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would be retained throughout the WSA. Closure of the WSA to motorized recreation would result in a slight positive benefit to wilderness values. Special features including sensitive plants and crucial deer fawning habitat would be retained and slightly enhanced.

Consequences

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation would close the entire 6,600 acres within the WSA to motorized recreation use eliminating 450 visitor days per year. Four miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would be closed to recreational vehicle use. Existing use within the WSA would relocate to other BLM public lands and U.S. Forest Service lands outside the WSA where additional opportunities could absorb this increased use. The Modesto Ridgerunners would have to relocate a portion of the route used for their annual 4-WD poker rally. Approximately 50 visitors associated with motorized hunting would continue to use the WSA without motorized vehicles. Due to its small size and narrow configuration the WSA would remain readily accessible by foot with most points being within 1 mile of the boundary roads that surround it. There would be only minor adverse impacts to motorized recreation use which would be displaced.

Conclusion:

The entire WSA would be closed eliminating 450 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use. Only minor adverse impacts are anticipated due to the availability of opportunities outside the WSA and the accessibility of the WSA by foot.

Impacts on Mineral Development

All 6,600 acres within the Masonic Mountains WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry and leasing. Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone, including a projected open-pit mine for disseminated gold in an area of moderate metallic mineral potential. Extraction of known deposits of sand and gravel would be foregone with limited sources available outside the WSA.

Conclusion:

Development of potential mineral resources within the WSA would be foregone. Known deposits of sand and gravel and projected deposits of disseminated gold would not be available for development.

Impacts on Geothermal Resource Development

Geothermal leasing, exploration, and development would be prohibited within the entire 6,600-acre WSA. Development of a potential 10-Mw low temperature resource would be foregone. Geothermal resource potential ranges from high in the southwest portion of the WSA to a low potential for the remainder. The projected small size and low temperature of any potential resource in the WSA as well as the lack of demand for additional electric power sources forecasted by the California Energy Commission (Draft Electricity Report, February 1985) indicate that only a minor impact would be incurred over the long term.

Conclusion:

Geothermal resource development would be prohibited. Development of a potential 10-Mw low temperature geothermal resource would be foregone. Over the long term, this would result in only a minor impact.

Impacts on Potential Bridgeport Indian Colony Expansion

Granting of public lands within the WSA to the Bridgeport Indian Colony under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act would be prohibited. The Indian Colony has expressed interest in 120 acres along the southwest edge of the WSA for future residential and commercial uses to meet their projected long-term expansion needs. Currently the Colony has a pending application for 40 acres of public lands outside the WSA adjacent to the 120 acres. These 40 acres would provide for current needs as well as a portion of their projected needs. It is difficult to quantify the impacts of the additional 120 acres not being available, however expansion opportunities are limited. Therefore, it is anticipated that over the long term there would be an adverse impact on the ability of the Bridgeport Indian Colony to expand should the need arise.

Conclusion:

Since public lands would not be available for potential expansion needs of the Bridgeport Indian Colony, there could be an adverse impact.

SLINKARD WSA
(CA-010-105/NV-030-531)

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)

0 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
6,760 Acres Nonwilderness

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 6,760 acres of the Slinkard WSA would not be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts associated with this proposal relate to wilderness values and the effects of continued motorized recreation use, assessment work on existing mining claims, and livestock grazing within the WSA.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

None of the WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation, therefore, none of the wilderness values would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. These wilderness values consist primarily of its very natural condition and the crucial deer fawning and winter habitat for the Walker mule deer herd.

Naturalness

Motorized recreation use would continue on 3 miles of primitive vehicle routes impairing the perception of naturalness on less than 10 acres. Approximately 3,700 acres in the eastern portion of the WSA would be designated as open to vehicular use with the remainder of the WSA designated as limited to existing roads and trails. The low level of use including a projected increase resulting in a total of less than 100

Consequences

visitor days and the rugged terrain that limits use to existing roads and trails would only slightly impair the perception of naturalness as a result of continued use of existing trails.

There is no mineral development projected within the WSA due to the generally low to nonexistent mineral potential. The 18 mining claims in the extreme northwest would most likely continue annual minimal mineral assessment work resulting in the loss of naturalness on one-half acre due to surface disturbance. This assessment work would locally impair naturalness on less than 5 acres in the northwest portion of the WSA.

Livestock grazing will continue with 526 AUMs allotted for sheep and cattle. There are no livestock improvement projects or increases in use levels projected for the WSA. Additionally, no vehicle use occurs in the WSA as support for livestock grazing. Livestock use has resulted in localized channel erosion along three-quarters of a mile of Slinkard Creek Tributary No. 1. Watershed rehabilitation of this portion of the creek will result in a minor, short-term impairment of naturalness due to the placement of instream gabions. However, planned planting of native vegetation will accomplish necessary rehabilitation and within 3 to 5 years result in a naturally appearing, productive riparian zone. There would be a slight benefit to the watershed with no additional levels of impacts projected as a result of continued livestock grazing.

Fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting would have only a marginal impact on naturalness. The present low demand for casual use related to harvesting dead and down or dead and standing fuelwood would result in 30 cords of fuelwood per year being removed from a 360-acre area in the northern portion of the WSA. Evidence of tree stumps and limbed wood would be apparent in localized areas after fuelwood cutting has occurred. Pinyon nut collecting is expected to have no effect on naturalness since the nuts are collected from the pine cones after the cones have fallen to the surface. The nuts are removed from the cones on site and the cones are randomly returned to the surface.

Solitude

Occasional motorized recreation use would detract from the feeling of solitude in the vicinity of the 3 miles of existing primitive routes. However the low level of current motorized recreation use (70 visitor days) as well as the projected total use of less than 100 visitor days would render only low levels of impacts to solitude.

The continued 526 AUMs of cattle and sheep grazing would not result in a change over the existing levels of solitude. Since there are no livestock improvement projects within the WSA there would be no associated vehicle use for inspection and maintenance to disturb solitude. Grazing occurs primarily along the lower slopes of the east and west boundaries of the WSA with any improvements or vehicle use occurring outside the WSA.

Rehabilitation efforts on Slinkard Creek Tributary would only impair solitude upon initial placement of the instream gabions. Use of a small tractor, dump truck and pickup truck would be required over a period of 10 days locally disturbing solitude.

Vehicle use and human activity associated with casual fuelwood cutting and pinyon nut collecting would have only minor local impacts on solitude. The low use and limited availability of fuelwood (15 vehicle trips per year and 30 cords on 360 acres) would only locally disturb solitude on an intermittent basis. Chainsaw activity would be very audible. The 10 vehicle trips associated with pinyon nut collecting would only marginally impact solitude on the same 360 acres due to the infrequent occurrence of use.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Continued motorized recreation use, including a slight increase to a total of less than 100 visitor days per year, would only negligibly impact opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation should the WSA not be designated wilderness. No other proposed increased use levels or projected development are anticipated within the WSA. Therefore, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would remain unchanged from existing levels.

Special Features

Crucial deer fawning and winter habitat for the Walker mule deer herd would remain available and basically unaffected by the Proposed Action. Projected increases in motorized recreation use would result in continued low levels of use of less than 100 visitor days per year.

Deer fawning habitat is located in the drainages along the steep eastern slope of the WSA where vehicle use is limited due to access and topography (less than 10 visitor days per year). Planned riparian rehabilitation along Slinkard Creek Tributary No. 1 would improve fawning habitat by reestablishing vegetation. Therefore the identified special features of the WSA, crucial deer fawning and winter habitat, would continue to be productive within the WSA with only negligible impacts from motorized recreation use.

Conclusion:

Wilderness values within the 6,760 acres of the WSA would essentially remain unchanged. Only slight or negligible impacts would occur from continued low levels of vehicle use for recreation, fuelwood harvesting, and pinyon nut collecting. Annual mining claim assessment work would impair the perception of naturalness on less than 5 acres.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

All motorized recreation use would continue throughout the 6,760 acres within the WSA. The eastern portion of the WSA, approximately 3,700 acres, is designated as open to vehicular use. However, due to rugged terrain and lack of access, use is very limited and estimated to be less than 10 visitor days per year on 1 mile of existing primitive vehicle routes. In the remaining western portion of the WSA, vehicle use is designated as limited to existing routes and trails. Approximately 2 miles of primitive vehicle routes currently receive 60 visitor days per year of motorized recreation use. A slight increase from the current total of 70 visitor days per year to a total of less than 100 visitor days is projected.

Consequences

Conclusion:

There would be no impacts on motorized recreation use in the WSA. The current 70 visitor days per year are anticipated to increase slightly but will remain less than 100 visitor days per year.

Adverse Impacts Which Cannot Be Avoided

There are no projected management actions or surface-disturbing activities that would result in any significant unavoidable adverse impacts. Continued livestock grazing, surface disturbance from mining assessments and the low level of motorized recreation use would only locally result in negligible adverse impacts.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

Under the Proposed Action, the WSA would not be designated wilderness and all current and projected short-term uses would continue. The productivity of the WSA would be maintained and not significantly affected by the continued low level of motorized recreation use or livestock grazing. Without wilderness designation the possibility of activities such as increased mineral development that could reduce long-term productivity is greater than under wilderness designation. However, mineral development potential in the Slinkard WSA is considered to be low and no mineral development is anticipated.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Due to the low levels of continued motorized recreation use and livestock grazing use as well as the lack of proposed surface-disturbing activities no irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

6,760 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
0 Acres Nonwilderness

Under this alternative, the entire 6,760 acres of the Slinkard WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The primary impacts under this alternative relate to motorized recreation use wilderness values including the special features of crucial deer fawning and wintering habitat.

Impact on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 6,760 acres within the WSA would be designated wilderness. All wilderness values within the WSA would receive special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation and special features would be retained.

Naturalness

There would be a slight, positive benefit to naturalness due primarily to the closure of the WSA to motorized recreation use, even though current vehicular use is less than 70 visitor days and occurs primarily on the 3 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes.

Assessment work on existing mining claims would be precluded as all forms of mineral entry and appropriations would be prohibited since it is not anticipated that there would be a determination of valid existing rights within the WSA's generally low to nonexistent mineral potential. The one-half acre of surface disturbance related to annual assessment work in the northwest portion of the WSA would not occur resulting in a low positive benefit since naturalness and the perception of naturalness would not be lost or impaired. Also benefiting naturalness would be the exclusion of any unforeseen mineral exploration or development in the WSA.

Livestock grazing would continue with 526 AUMs for sheep and cattle with no proposed livestock improvement projects as described under the Proposed Action. The watershed rehabilitation to improve localized impacts from livestock grazing will occur as described under the Proposed Action. There would be a slight benefit to the watershed with no additional levels of impacts projected as a result of continued livestock grazing.

A very slight positive benefit to naturalness as a result of prohibiting fuelwood cutting in the WSA. The low demand, less than 30 cords per year with 15 vehicle trips, would be accommodated on public lands outside the WSA. Pinyon nut collecting would be allowed without the use of motor vehicles. Pinyon nut collection would have no noticeable effect on wilderness values with less than 15 visitor days projected.

Solitude

There would be a slight positive benefit to solitude as a result of closing the WSA to motorized recreation use. Eliminating the low level of current use (70 visitor days) and precluding a slight increase in motorized use to a total of less than 100 visitor days occurring primarily on the 3 miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would only enhance solitude slightly.

Grazing use would continue to be allotted at the current 526 AUMs with no livestock improvement projects within the WSA. Therefore no vehicle use would be required. There would be no change over existing levels of solitude as described under the Proposed Action.

Rehabilitation efforts would be the same as described under the Proposed Action. Solitude would only be impaired locally over a 10-day period as a result of associated vehicle use.

Prohibition of fuelwood cutting would eliminate human activity, associated vehicle use, and chainsaw noise, thus enhancing solitude slightly. Demand for fuelwood is low with less than 30 cords and 15 vehicle trips eliminated. Pinyon nut collecting would continue with associated use decreased from the current 25 visitor days to 15 visitor days with 10 vehicle trips. This decrease in use would slightly enhance solitude.

Consequences

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would slightly benefit from the elimination of motorized recreation use (70 visitor days) and casual vehicle use associated with fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting (25 vehicle trips).

Special Features

Crucial deer fawning and winter habitat for the Walker mule deer herd would improve slightly as a result of elimination of 70 visitor days of motorized recreation use and 25 vehicle trips associated with casual fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting, as well as eliminating chainsaw use. This would result in a slight positive benefit to the habitat and fawning productivity as would the proposed watershed rehabilitation described under the Proposed Action.

Conclusion:

Wilderness designation of the entire 6,760 acres within the WSA would result in a slight positive benefit to all wilderness values. Elimination of motorized recreation use and casual vehicle use associated with fuelwood harvesting and pinyon nut collecting would slightly improve solitude as well as the deer fawning and winter habitat. Prohibiting mining claim assessment work would maintain the perception of naturalness on a localized basis.

Impacts on Motorized Recreation Use

Wilderness designation would close the entire 6,760 acres within the WSA to motorized recreation use eliminating approximately 70 visitor days per year. Three miles of existing primitive vehicle routes would be closed to recreational vehicle use. Use on the east side is limited due to rugged terrain and lack of access resulting in a loss of only 10 visitor days per year. The west side of the WSA receives approximately 60 visitor days of use which would be foregone. Recreational vehicle use is primarily associated with hunting with some snowmobiling use occurring along the west slope. Due to the lack of current use resulting from the rugged terrain and inaccessibility of the majority of the WSA, this would only be a minor impact.

Conclusion:

The entire WSA would be closed, eliminating 70 visitor days of motorized recreation use. Only minor adverse impacts are anticipated due to the low level of use.

Chapter 5

Consultation & Coordination

CHAPTER 5

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The planning/EIS process leading up to the Final EIS has included numerous opportunities for public involvement. Solicitation of public input relative to the wilderness study effort began in January 1982, with the media release from the BLM California State Office requesting input on identification of energy and mineral potentials in all of the WSAs in the state. On November 5, 1982, a Federal Register Notice of Intent to conduct resource management planning signaled the initiation of the wilderness studies included in this EIS. The notice identified the areas to be studied, described the planning process, listed the disciplines to be represented on the study team, and invited the public to participate in the planning process by surfacing issues, commenting on the planning criteria, providing information to be considered in the planning process, and commenting on the proposals and analysis incorporated in the draft plans and EIS when developed.

On December 3, 1982, a wilderness study announcement and mailing list renewal notice was sent to over 500 people on the Bakersfield District wilderness mailing list. The announcement described the current study effort, giving details on the areas under consideration, the planning process, and opportunities for public involvement. A media release with similar information was issued the same day. A Federal Register notice announcing the availability of planning criteria for public review was published on February 25, 1983.

On September 16, 1983, a Federal Register notice indicated that the draft EIS had been prepared, announced review locations, and identified the times, dates, and locations of the public meeting and hearing. On the same date, a letter was sent to the wilderness mailing list summarizing the draft EIS as well as giving information similar to the Federal Register notice. Distribution of the DEIS to early requesters, to the California State Clearinghouse, and to other local, state, and federal agencies and elected officials occurred between September 20 and October 4, 1983. Distribution to the public continued upon request through the review period.

The Environmental Protection Agency filed the DEIS and published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on September 23, 1983. This notice was amended by an October 28, 1983, Federal Register notice which identified a review extension to December 21, 1983, resulting from a later EPA filing date than was previously anticipated. An October 10, 1983 media release also announced the availability of the draft EIS and advertised the upcoming public meeting and hearing.

A public meeting was held in Markleeville, California, on October 26, 1983. The public hearing was held the following day, October 27, 1983, in Bishop, California, in a split afternoon/evening session. Meeting and hearing details and comment summaries appear in the Public Comments on the Draft EIS section later in this chapter.

A November 22, 1983, media release publicized the December 2, 1983, BLM Bakersfield District Advisory Council Meeting during which the draft EIS recommendations were reviewed, public input to the Council was received, and a Council resolution to the BLM was developed. The Advisory Council Meeting was held in Bishop, California. The Council's resolutions appear in the "Written Comments and Responses" section of this chapter.

RESULTS FROM THE PUBLIC REVIEW

A formal public hearing on the draft EIS was conducted on October 27, 1983, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Bishop City Council Chambers in Bishop, California. Thirty-one individuals (not including hearing and BLM personnel) attended the hearing and fourteen testified. A representative from the Office of the Solicitor presided as Hearing Officer, and a court reporter recorded the proceedings verbatim. The full hearing transcripts may be reviewed in the BLM Bakersfield District Office.

Some general comments made at the public hearing included one statement questioning the need for wilderness when the areas under consideration are getting along fine under present management, and another stating that there are already enough state and Federal Parks, Monuments, and Historical Sites to provide protection. Two other comments opposed to wilderness designation in general included one stating that there are too many resources on government land to be bottled up in a wilderness area, and another claiming that wilderness discriminates against hunters and the very young, old, and disabled. All of the above comments appear to either question the value of wilderness or the purpose of conducting wilderness studies. The Wilderness Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act have provided the impetus for wilderness studies as well as the rationale for creation of a National Wilderness Preservation System.

Another general comment cited wilderness designation as inconsistent with the Conservation and Open Space Element of the Inyo County General Plan. Consistency with local plans is considered in the EIS under Consistency With Other Plans in Chapter 5 - Consultation and Coordination.

The need for adequate corridor widths for utility line expansion was expressed. The corridors in question were identified in the existing land use plan and modifications are outside the scope of this wilderness amendment. Furthermore, these corridors are unaffected by the Proposed Action within the EIS.

One speaker asked why the FLPMA-required mineral surveys have not yet been published. These surveys have not yet occurred and will be conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines only on areas recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

Two comments considered to fall outside the scope of this EIS included one opposed to the "tough" prudent man test used in mine evaluation and another opposed to the suitable recommendation developed for WSA CDCA 122 in the California Desert Plan.

Some final general comments included one proposing wilderness designation as a "total" wilderness designation within which no motorized vehicles would be allowed for aid to injured hikers and another contended that 85% of Inyo County's economy is recreation related, much of that related to wilderness use which continues to grow.

The remaining comments were specific to individual WSAs and will be summarized by WSA. No specific comments were made regarding the Independence Creek, Symmes Creek, Excelsior, Granite Mountains, Walford Springs, Bodie Mountains, Bodie, Masonic Mountains, and Slinkard WSAs.

Sacatar Meadows: One comment noted that the portion recommended suitable for wilderness contains a road and, thus, questioned how people would get into the area. The Deer Springs Road the individual mentioned is not considered a road in the suitable area because of its deteriorating and poor condition. At the ridgeline it becomes unusable. Finally, access to and around the area is available via the Nine Mile Canyon Road. One other individual stated that since grazing is established in the suitable area, it would be allowed to continue in the future. The EIS addresses this fact.

Cerro Gordo: Three comments stated that the road from Cerro Gordo to New York Butte should be kept open and not closed by the plan. This road was identified as a road during the wilderness inventory (1979) and, as the WSA boundary, would not be closed as a result of any wilderness designation. A few comments mentioned the Saline Valley Salt Tram values. Two of these comments indicated that the Salt Tram was a magnificent piece of workmanship and should be available for all people to see and enjoy. However, since the Cerro Gordo to New York Butte Road and the Swansea Road are unaffected by any suitable wilderness recommendation, access to the Salt Tram would still be available for all people to enjoy. One commenter erroneously believed that the Salt Tram would have to be dismantled under wilderness guidelines. One comment indicated that wilderness designation would better protect the Tram due to motor vehicle use restrictions. One comment noted the existence of the Pat Keyes Trail. Two comments stated the area has good cattle grazing potential. However, only a few small areas provide potential for limited livestock grazing; the overall area would not support cattle grazing activities. Finally, the Benton-Owens Valley MFP, which is being amended for wilderness, does not authorize grazing in the Inyo Mountains. Four comments stated that the Inyo Mountains are a highly mineralized area. However, known mineral potential in the WSA was taken into account during the wilderness study analysis and recommendations were made accordingly (i.e., based on degree of potential, mineral types, mineral development potential, and potential for valid existing rights). One speaker indicated that the area contains lead and silver, but no smelters. Thus shipping the raw ore would be prohibitively expensive. Two comments indicated that valid existing mineral rights would affect wilderness manageability. The impacts on wilderness values resulting from mining that would be permitted under wilderness designation as a result of a determination of valid existing rights have been analyzed in the EIS.

One comment indicated that hunting would be lost if the area became wilderness. However, under the Wilderness Management Policy, hunting is allowed in designated wilderness areas. One comment acknowledged that hunting would be allowed to continue, but further stated that poaching would be better controlled. One individual alluded to revenues related to tourism, mining, and cattle grazing that the county and local individuals might lose as a result of any wilderness designation. Socioeconomic impacts are addressed in the EIS. One comment indicated that approximately 1,000 vehicles used the area in 1983 and many types of use occur in the area. The EIS addresses recreation and other types of uses in the area. One comment stated that the area contained outstanding views of the Sierra Nevada and Saline Valley. Three speakers stated that the roads and springs have been maintained by hunters, miners, cattlemen, and tourists. Two comments indicated that cattle grazing has been occurring in the area for a range of over 30 to 50 years. One comment indicated that poor economics and weak range discourages grazing in the area. This comment also indicated that illegal grazing has occurred in these areas. One speaker stated that the WSA is unnatural due to the existence of roads and mining sites. The EIS has identified the existence of certain unnatural features, but concludes that they are substantially unnoticeable in the area as a whole.

One comment indicated that mineral and geothermal activity is mostly low to nonexistent--no critical minerals are in the area. Energy and mineral information, based on GEM Reports, is documented in the EIS. One individual stated that 1,005 individuals had signed a petition opposing any wilderness designation for Cerro Gordo and Southern Inyo. However, the actual petition presented at the hearing states, "We, the undersigned, request that the California Desert Plan and the Benton-Owens Valley Planning Unit boundaries be changed, and that the shaded areas on the attached map be withdrawn from the California Desert Plan and the Benton-Owens Valley Planning Unit." The wording of this petition implies that an administrative change be made in land use planning boundaries, and thus, falls outside the scope of this wilderness EIS. And finally, one comment addressed the aforementioned petition stating that it had been circulated with distortion and untruths (i.e., people were told the Salt Tram would be removed, grazing would cease, miners would be pushed off their claims, and the land would be closed.)

Southern Inyo: The aforementioned comments described under Cerro Gordo also apply to Southern Inyo. Additional comments from the public hearing apply to Southern Inyo. Two comments stated that any suitable wilderness designation would be most appropriate for the area from New York Butte north to the USFS boundary. One comment stated that a windmill and water trough had been constructed in the past at Burgess Well. However, this specific area has been recommended nonsuitable under the Proposed Action.

Crater Mountain, Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tableland, and Casa Diablo: One speaker requested that a 3-mile-wide utility line corridor be established for the WSAs under the Partial and All Wilderness Alternatives, since the current half-mile-wide corridor was not considered adequate to meet full expansion needs of utility power companies. However, the Benton-Owens Valley MFP only prescribes a half-mile-wide corridor in the Tableland area and no corridor is allowed for the Crater Mountain area. Since the

nature of the comment pertains to land use planning that would require a separate plan amendment, the comment falls outside the scope of this wilderness EIS.

Mormon Meadows and Mt. Biedeman: One comment stated that there is a potential need for expansion of the existing utility line right-of-way along the boundaries of the WSAs for the All Wilderness and Partial Wilderness Alternatives. However, since the nature of the comment pertains to land use planning which would require a separate plan amendment, the comment falls outside the scope of this wilderness EIS.

Public Meeting

A public meeting on the draft EIS was held on October 26, 1983, at the Turtle Rock County Park Community Clubhouse near Markleeville, California, in response to earlier interest exhibited by Alpine County. However, no members of the public attended the session.

CONSULTATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Consultation and coordination on threatened and endangered species was achieved by comparing the resource data on species occurring in WSAs against Fish and Wildlife Service and California Native Plant Society's published list of Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species. The coordination also included sending the Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Native Plant Society copies of the Draft EIS. Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has commented that Section 7 consultation need not be initiated in response to wilderness recommendations. However, formal consultation should be initiated prior to on-the-ground implementation of activities which may affect threatened or endangered species. (See Appendix for correspondence between the BLM and FWS.)

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

FLPMA requires that BLM plans be as consistent as possible with the plans of other agencies, while Federal laws, policies, and regulations are also considered. The plans of cities, counties, the state, and other Federal agencies were considered in the preparation of this EIS.

The Proposed Action for all WSAs in Inyo County are consistent with Inyo County's General Land Use Plan - Open Space and Conservation Element except for portions of the Southern Inyo WSA (CA-010-056). Of the 27,420 acres recommended for wilderness in this WSA, approximately 13,000 acres would be consistent with the County's General Plan. The remaining 14,420 acres that are recommended as suitable for wilderness would be inconsistent with the General Plan. Documented impacts in the EIS were based on issues as they relate to projected development or utilization of a WSA's resource values. The County provided input and comments, regarding potential development or protection of the WSA's resource values, during the public review period.

The Proposed Action for all WSAs in Mono County are consistent with Mono County's Land Use Plan. During the public review period, the County was given opportunity to comment on the potential development or preservation of the WSAs' resource values. In addition, the Proposed Action for the portion of the Slinkard WSA (NV-030-531) located in Alpine County is consistent with the County's Land Use Plan. Mono County has considered a site in the southwest portion of the Masonic Mountains WSA (CA-010-102) in a feasibility analysis of potential landfill sites. However, there has been additional interest expressed and plans proposed that would utilize this site should the WSA not be designated wilderness.

Finally, non-WSA lands that adjoin or are located within the BLM WSAs are either owned by private individuals or are administered by the City of Los Angeles, State of California, United States Forest Service, or the BLM. The Bureau's Proposed Action for each of the WSAs would be consistent with local land use plans as well as the objectives and plans of the BLM, United States Forest Service, City of Los Angeles, and the State of California.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE DRAFT EIS

The following agencies, organizations, and individuals received copies of the Draft EIS. Those who commented are indicated by an asterisk (*).

Elected Officials

U.S. Senators (California)

U.S. House (affected districts)

State (list individuals)

State Senators (affected districts)

State Assembly (affected districts)

Federal Agencies

Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force*

Environmental Protection Agency*

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs*
Bureau of Mines*
Bureau of Reclamation
Fish and Wildlife Service
Geological Survey
National Park Service
Office of the Assistant Secretary--Energy and Minerals

Coordination

Federal Aviation Administration

Western Area Power Administration*

California - State Agencies

Office of the Governor

Office of Planning and Research

State Historic Preservation Office

Cal Trans*

Resources Agency*
- Department of Water Resources
- Department of Forestry
- Native American Heritage Commission
- Department of Fish and Game
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- State Lands Commission
- Energy Resources and Conservation and Development Commission
- Division of Mines and Geology
- Division of Oil and Gas
- Air Resources, Solid Waste Management, and Water Resources Control Boards

County Governments - Boards of Supervisors and Planning Departments

Alpine
Inyo*
Mono
Tulare*

Other Local Agencies

Inyo County Health Department
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Other Organizations

Alexander Lindsay Jr. Museum
Bureau of Land Management -
Bakersfield District Advisory Council*
California Off-Road Vehicle Association (C.O.R.V.A.)
California Federation of Mineralogical Societies
California Mining Association
California Wilderness Coalition
California Association of 4-WD Clubs*
California Native Plant Society*
California Mining Association*
Cholame Township Sportsmen Association
Defenders of Wildlife*
Desert Survivors*
Fresno-Kings County Cattlemens Association
Hollister Gem & Lapidary Club
Kern County Grange
Kern Plateau Association
Mission Trails Bowhunter Association
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Natural Resources Defense Council
Needles Gem and Mineral Club
Owens Valley Cultural Center
Sierra Club*
South Council of Conservation Clubs
Sportsmens Council of Central California
The Wilderness Society
Tule Gem and Mineral Society
Utah Wilderness Association
White Rock Club

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIS

Ninety-two letters, postmarked on or before December 21, 1983, the end of the comment period, were received by BLM, Bakersfield District. All comments both written and from the hearing transcripts, were utilized in developing the Final EIS. The written comments and the hearing transcripts will be sent, along with this Final EIS and the Wilderness Study Report, to the President and on to Congress.

In preparation of the final EIS, all comments, including those from the hearing transcripts, were reviewed and considered. Comments that presented new data, questioned findings and analyses, or raised questions or issues relating directly to the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action or alternatives were responded to. General comments favoring a specific alternative have been noted and considered, but required no specific response. In addition, comments addressing items outside of the scope of this EIS were not responded to.

Although the overall public review period ended on December 21, 1983, a few late comments received through December 28, 1983, have been addressed.

Comments and related responses are identified by the number of the comment letter and the number of the comment in that letter. Comment letters are numbered in the order they were received but are arranged by agencies (Federal, State, and local), organizations, and individuals.

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U.S. Department of Energy Western Power Administration	Letter No. 96

State Agencies

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Coordination

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66

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
215 Fremont Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94105

DEC 14 1983

DEC 1983
RECEIVED
U.S. DEPT INTERIOR
BUREAU LAND MGMNT.
BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue/Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) titled BENTON-OWENS/BODIE COLEVILLE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA. We have the enclosed comments regarding this DEIS.

We have classified this DEIS as Category LO-2 (lack of objections - more information needed). The classification and date of EPA's comments will be published in the Federal Register in accordance with our public disclosure responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. Please send three copies of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to this office at the same time it is officially filed with our Washington, D.C. office. If you have any questions, please contact Loretta Kahn Barsamian, Chief, EIS Review Section, at (415) 974-8188 or FTS 454-8188.

Sincerely yours,

Charles W. Murray, Jr.
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Policy, Technical, and
Resources Management

Enclosure (1)

5-11

COMMENTS ON THE DEIS ON THE BENTON-OWENS VALLEY, BODIE-COLEVILLE STUDY AREAS

66.1

1. Impacts of Nonwilderness Alternatives. In Table 4.1, Chapter IV, which summarizes environmental consequences of alternative actions, impacts of development proposals are described as "possible loss of wilderness values where development occurs." The DEIS provides an insufficient level of detail regarding impact discussions for Alternatives in locations within the Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) that would not be provided wilderness status and hence subject to development proposals such as mining, geothermal development, timber harvesting, grazing or vehicular activities. Chapter IV of the DEIS should describe potential impacts from development by referring to wilderness values described in the Wilderness Planning Criteria Matrix of Table 3.1. A definition of "wilderness values" should also be given in the glossary.

   Because specific development proposals in nonwilderness areas are not known at this time, specific impacts are unknown. However potentially significant impacts of these proposals should be discussed in general terms in the FEIS. We recognize that full disclosure of impacts associated with specific projects would be assessed during later environmental review of resource development projects. Nevertheless, the FEIS should discuss (at least qualitatively) the types of impacts expected in nonwilderness areas potentially subjected to future mining, geothermal development, timber harvesting or other activities. In particular, discussions of air and water quality impacts should be included and areas of environmental sensitivity identified (i.e., highly susceptible to impacts).

66.2

2. Water Quality The DEIS does not discuss existing water resources and water quality conditions on the WSAs. Baseline data on water resources and water quality in the area (including maps) should be provided and described in terms of Federal-State water quality standards. For alternatives where potential development proposals could result in degradation of water quality, the types of impacts expected should be discusssed. These impacts could include potential decreases in surface water or ground water quality caused by altered stormwater runoff patterns, sedimentation resulting from increased erosion, pollutants from facilities operation or vehicular activity, and leachate from spent materials such as mine tailings. The relationship between the types of water quality impacts expected and the potential for impacts on beneficial uses should be discussed. Also, flood control, riparian enhancement, spring development and other water uses are listed in the alternatives under Management Actions. Without baseline data, the impacts of these activities on water quality are difficult to assess.

66.2 cont.

3. Air Quality. The DEIS does not describe the existing air quality conditions in the WSAs. The existing air quality characteristics of the study areas, and current emission sources affecting them should be described in the FEIS in terms of Ambient Air Quality Standards. As with water quality, the types of impacts associated with potential development proposals in nonwilderness areas such as mining, geothermal development, timber harvesting or vehicular activities should be described in the FEIS. These impacts could include fugitive dust emissions from mining or lumbering activity, facilities construction or vehicular activity, and stationary source emissions from any processing or power facilities operation. Also potential impacts to any Class I air quality areas resulting from resource development in nonwilderness areas should be discussed in the FEIS.

66.3

4. Mitigation. The DEIS indicates on page 4-73 (Mitigation No. 3) that "protection of soils, watershed, visual resources, air quality, endangered species, cultural resources, and other resources is guided by special legislation and BLM policy and regulations." A discussion of the most pertinent of these regulations and policies in the FEIS is necessary to determine the effectiveness of mitigation. For instance, a recurring statement in Chapter IV describing biological impacts indicates "possible degradation of plants and habitat due to motorized vehicle use, mineral and geothermal development, and permitted grazing activities. Continued protection under Endangered Species Act and Bureau Policy." All species of plants identified as species of concern in the DEIS are candidate rather than listed species under the Endangered Species Act. A Summary of Bureau policy regarding plants of this classification is needed in the FEIS to determine whether these species would be protected given possible future development.

   Mitigation Measure No. 4 in the DEIS indicates that "general mitigation measures identified in the Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville, South Sierra Foothills, and Reno Grazing Environmental Impact Statements will be utilized." A summary of the intent and types of mitigation strategies included in these reports that would mitigate development activities in nonwilderness areas should be provided in the FEIS.

5-12

Response 66.1

The FEIS has been reformatted to more clearly identify management actions and associated impacts. Additional information has been included to further describe resource values and to serve as a basis for the impact analysis. For the Proposed Action and alternatives for each specific WSA a scenario of management actions is described in Chapter 2. These management actions represent planning projections of activities that can be reasonably expected to occur. Mineral/energy development, recreation use (including motorized recreation use), livestock grazing and range improvements, and wildlife habitat improvements as well as other activities anticipated are identified. In Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences, each management action is assessed by WSA and alternative to identify potential impacts on the issues identified on pages 1-5 through 1-37.

Response 66.2

For each WSA an issue concerning the impacts of wilderness designation or nondesignation on water quality was considered. Generally one of the following three situations applied to an individual WSA: 1) there were no projected activities or management actions that would result in impacts to water quality with the existing use levels, including motorized vehicle use and livestock grazing, remaining unchanged or with only slight increases projected; 2) projected surface-disturbing activities such as mineral/energy development would not be located adjacent to or near perennial water sources or streams; and 3) potential impact-causing activities such as mineral development would occur under a No Wilderness scenario or under a Wilderness scenario as a result of anticipated valid existing rights and would not vary between the Proposed Action and Alternatives. See Identification of Issues on pages 1-5 through 1-37 for discussion of impacts on water quality for each specific WSA. Additionally, the assessments in this EIS are based on planning projections of actions that could reasonably be expected to occur within a particular WSA. While these projections and assessments are not anticipated to result in potential impacts, an actual proposal for development including mineral/energy resource development would be analyzed prior to implementation to determine actual impacts. The BLM along with other agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of California would develop an array of specific mitigation measures to assure water quality is maintained at levels established by Federal and State laws.

The water resources within the WSAs are primarily small perennial streams, tributaries, and isolated springs with little if any baseline data available for use in this EIS. Since "impacts on water quality" is not considered an issue for analysis, inventories of the water resources within the WSAs to develop baseline data were not conducted for this FEIS.

Response 66.3

Mitigation No. 3 was primarily intended to convey the idea that land use activities under a nonwilderness designation would not be unregulated. Specific descriptions of pertinent legislation, Bureau policies and regulations, and existing mitigation measures were believed to unnecessarily increase document length. Incorporation by reference, as encouraged by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, was felt to be sufficient.

In the FEIS, specific mitigation measures are identified either in Chapter 2 or Chapter 4 as appropriate to allow analysis of the individual management actions.

RESOLUTION 84-1

OF THE

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

93

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Interior has chartered the Bakersfield District Advisory Council on October 15, 1983 to provide representative citizen counsel and advice to the Bureau of Land Management District Manager regarding planning and management of the public lands resources within the Bakersfield District; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council has been specifically charged by the Bakersfield District Manager to examine the environmental impact analysis and available public comments, and to provide their recommendation on the Benton-Owens Valley/ Bodie-Coleville Draft Wilderness EIS for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council has reviewed the Preliminary Wilderness Recommendations and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas of August 12, 1983; the transcripts of the public hearing on this document held on October 27, 1983; all comment letters on this document received in the Bakersfield District Office by November 22, 1983; and oral testimony from Inyo County and concerned individuals at the Council meeting of December 2, 1983.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Advisory Council agrees to give no further consideration to Alternatives II (All Wilderness) and III (Partial Wilderness) of the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Draft Wilderness EIS.

Passed and adopted this 2nd day of December, 1983.

AYES: Council Members Brekke, Calkins, Days, Hluza, Huey, and T. Johnson.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Council Members Azvedo and Churchman.

December 2, 1983
Date

Paul F. Johnson, Chairman
Bakersfield District Advisory Council

RESOLUTION 84-2

OF THE

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Interior has chartered the Bakersfield District Advisory Council on October 15, 1983 to provide representative citizen counsel and advice to the Bureau of Land Management District Manager regarding planning and management of the public lands resources within the Bakersfield District; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council has been specifically charged by the Bakersfield District Manager to examine the environmental impact analysis and available public comments, and to provide their recommendation on the Benton-Owens Valley/ Bodie-Coleville Draft Wilderness EIS for consideration; and

WHEREAS; the Advisory Council has reviewed the Preliminary Wilderness Recommendations and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas of August 12, 1983; the transcripts of the public hearing on this document held on October 27, 1983; all comment letters on this document received in the Bakersfield District Office by November 22, 1983; and oral testimony from Inyo County and concerned individuals at the Council meeting of December 2, 1983; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council recognizes the intensity of conflicts and focus of comments in the Cerro Gordo (CA-010-055) and Southern Inyo (CA-010-056) Wilderness Study Areas.

93.1 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Advisory Council recommends that Wilderness Study Area CA-010-055 (Cerro Gordo) be considered nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

93.2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Advisory Council recommends that the portion of Wilderness Study Area CA-010-056 (Southern Inyo) north of the Long John Canyon Trail and New York Butte (see attached map) be considered suitable for wilderness designation.

Passed and adopted this 2nd day of December, 1983.

AYES: Council Members Brekke, Calkins, Hluza, T. Johnson, and P. Johnson.

NOES: Council Members Days and Huey.

ABSENT: Council Members Azvedo and Churchman.

December 2, 1983
Date

Paul F. Johnson, Chairman
Bakersfield District Advisory Council

RESOLUTION 84-3

OF THE

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Interior has chartered the Bakersfield District Advisory Council on October 15, 1983 to provide representative citizen counsel and advice to the Bureau of Land Management District Manager regarding planning and management of the public lands resources within the Bakersfield District; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council has been specifically charged by the Bakersfield District Manager to examine the environmental impact analysis and available public comments, and to provide their recommendation on the Benton-Owens Valley/ Bodie-Coleville Draft Wilderness EIS for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council has reviewed the Preliminary Wilderness Recommendations and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas of August 12, 1983; the transcripts of the public hearing on this document held on October 27, 1983; all comment letters on this document received in the Bakersfield District Office by November 22, 1983; and oral testimony from Inyo County and concerned individuals at the Council meeting of December 2, 1983.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Advisory Council recommends that Wilderness Study Area CA-010-027 (Sacatar Meadows) be considered suitable for wilderness designation.

Passed and adopted this 2nd day of December, 1983.

AYES: Council Members Brekke, Calkins, Days, Hluza, Huey, and T. Johnson.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Council Members Azvedo and Churchman.

December 2, 1983
Date

Paul F. Johnson, Chairman
Bakersfield District Advisory Council

RESOLUTION 84-4

OF THE

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Interior has chartered the Bakersfield District Advisory Council on October 15, 1983 to provide representative citizen counsel and advice to the Bureau of Land Management District Manager regarding planning and management of the public lands resources within the Bakersfield District; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council has been specifically charged by the Bakersfield District Manager to examine the environmental impact analysis and available public comments, and to provide their recommendation on the Benton-Owens Valley/ Bodie-Coleville Draft Wilderness EIS for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council has reviewed the Preliminary Wilderness Recommendations and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas of August 12, 1983; the transcripts of the public hearing on this document held on October 27, 1983; all comment letters on this document received in the Bakersfield District Office by November 22, 1983; and oral testimony from Inyo County and concerned individuals at the Council meeting of Decenber 2, 1983.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Advisory Council opposes Alternative IV (No Wilderness) of the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Draft Wilderness EIS.

Passed and adopted this 2nd day of December, 1983.

AYES: Council Members Brekke, Calkins, Days, Hluza, Huey, and T. Johnson.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Council Members Azvedo and Churchman.

December 2, 1983
Date

Paul F. Johnson, Chairman
Bakersfield District Advisory Council

Response 93.1

The Proposed Action has been modified. The Cerro Gordo WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation for the reasons discussed on pages 1-39 and 1-40 concerning selection of the Proposed Action.

Response 93.2

The DEIS Proposed Action for the Southern Inyo WSA has not been modified for reasons outlined on page 1-41 concerning selection of the Proposed Action. Most comments and conflicts concerning the portion south of the Long John Canyon Trail focused on mineral resource potentials. The GEM Reports, which provide the most current mineral information for the area, identify no significant mineral resource conflicts in the suitable proposal with respect to specific mineral potentials and associated development potentials.

94

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF MINES

WESTERN FIELD OPERATIONS CENTER
EAST 360 3RD AVENUE
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99202

November 21, 1986

Memorandum

To: Robert D. Rheiner, Jr., District Manager--Bakersfield District, Bureau of Land Management, Bakersfield, California

From: Supervisor--Minerals Involvement Section, Branch of Engineering Studies

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Wilderness Recommendations for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas, Nevada

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your draft EIS.

94.1 The document addresses mineral resources well in the text descriptions of the wilderness study areas (WSA's) but omits their extent on the maps. Please consider adding a mineral potential map for each of the WSA's recommended for wilderness. We recommend you consult the draft Wilderness EIS for the Winnemucca BLM District, Nevada, for their excellent handling of mineral resources.

The Branch of Mineral Land Assessment (MLA), Bureau of Mines, conducted mineral investigations, as directed by BLM, on two of the three WSA's of the Preferred Alternative recommended for wilderness--Sacatar Meadows and Southern Inyo. We suggest the mineral information from the MLA reports to BLM be incorporated into the final Wilderness EIS.

D'Ardy P. Banister

D'Ardy P. Banister

Response 94.1

The FEIS has included additional minerals information including textual descriptions of locations or areas of mineral potentials. The existing resources maps for each of the WSAs also show concentration of mining claims where they exist.

95

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
REGIONAL CIVIL ENGINEER, WESTERN REGION (AFESC)
630 SANSOME STREET - ROOM 1316
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111-2278

NOV 13 1986

ROVP (Farrel/556-0882)

Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Mr. Richard F. Johnson
Deputy State Director
Bureau of Land Management
California State Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

1. Reference LEEVX letter of 24 October 1986, same subject, attached.

2. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the subject DEIS and offer the following comments.

95.1

a. As shown on the attached map, the areas being considered in this study for designation as wilderness are generally subject to military overflights... some areas more-so than others. We recommend that you include consideration of such activities in your discussion and decision-making process. Within that context, we further recommend you consider location, altitude, and frequency of flights.

b. In selecting overflight training routes, the Air Force must consider mission requirements and fuel costs, as well as environmental constraints in the decision to locate such activities. Ideally, training routes are located within areas which are relatively isolated, maintain sparse populations, are presently under federal jurisdiction, have diverse topography and a minimum of commercial activities. It is obvious that these characteristics are also compatible to a large degree with potential wilderness areas. Therefore, even-though the Sacator Meadows, Cerro Gordo, and Southern Inyo Sites are subject to relatively high numbers of overflights, the Air Force supports your recommendations for wilderness designations to the extent that such designations will not place restrictions on military overflights.

3. We hope these comments are useful in your planning process. Please address your questions or concerns to the undersigned, Mr. David Farrel, or Mr. William Cox at (415) 556-6439.

Phillip E. Lammi
PHILLIP E. LAMMI, Chief
Environmental Planning Division

1 Atch
Training Route Map

5-18

DOD
AREA PLANNING AP/1B CHART
MILITARY TRAINING ROUTES - WESTERN US

EFFECTIVE 0901Z 21 NOV 1985
TO 0901Z 16 JAN 1986

SCALE: 1" = 30 NM

Published by
DEFENSE MAPPING AGENCY AEROSPACE CENTER
3200 SOUTH SECOND STREET
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63118-3399

LEGEND

AERODROMES

- Military
- Joint Military-Civil
- Civil (military landing rights and minimum of 3000' hard surfaced runway)
- Civil (no military landing rights and/or less than 3000' hard surfaced runway)

RADIO AIDS TO NAVIGATION

- VOR
- TACAN
- VORTAC
- RNG
- NDB
- LCZR
- Identification — SFO
- Radial Line — 003

FLIGHT SERVICE STATION

- Located at Facility or Aerodrome — Name
- Other Locations — Name

MILITARY TRAINING ROUTES

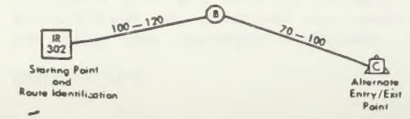
COLOR CODE: The following colors will be used to identify the different types of routes.

- IFR Military Training Route (IR) — RED
- VFR Military Training Route (VR) — BLUE
- Slow Speed Low Altitude Training Routes (SR) — BLACK

SYMBOLOGY: The following symbols will apply to all Military Training Routes. The examples are shown in black, however the color of symbol used on the chart is determined by the type of route (see color code above).

- Starting Point — IR14
  Note: In all cases the letter "A" will be dropped in favor of the route identification.
- Turning Point — 8

Sample Military Training Route



- Alternate Entry Point — C
- Alternate Exit Point — A
- Alternate Entry/Exit Point — D
- Multiple Point
- Military Training Route and Identification — 12
- Ending Point
- Multiple Route — 1, 3
- Entry Route
- Re-entry Route
- Alternate Entry Route
- Transition Route
- Departure Route

ALTITUDES FOR (IR) AND (VR) ROUTES:

1. All altitudes are shown in hundreds of feet and are MSL unless otherwise indicated.
2. Altitudes are published as follows:
   A. Symbol "S" indicates that the altitude is 500' AGL or below.
   B. 80 indicates hard altitude of 8000' MSL.
   C. S — 09 indicates a floor of 500' AGL or below and ceiling of 900' AGL.
   D. 50 — 70 indicates a floor of 5000' MSL and a ceiling of 7000' MSL.
3. CAUTION — The route segment altitudes appearing on this chart are designed to alert users as to the altitude range at which they may expect to encounter military traffic. For specific altitudes military units planning to use a route must refer to the AP/1B Booklet.

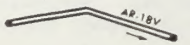
HOURS OF OPERATION

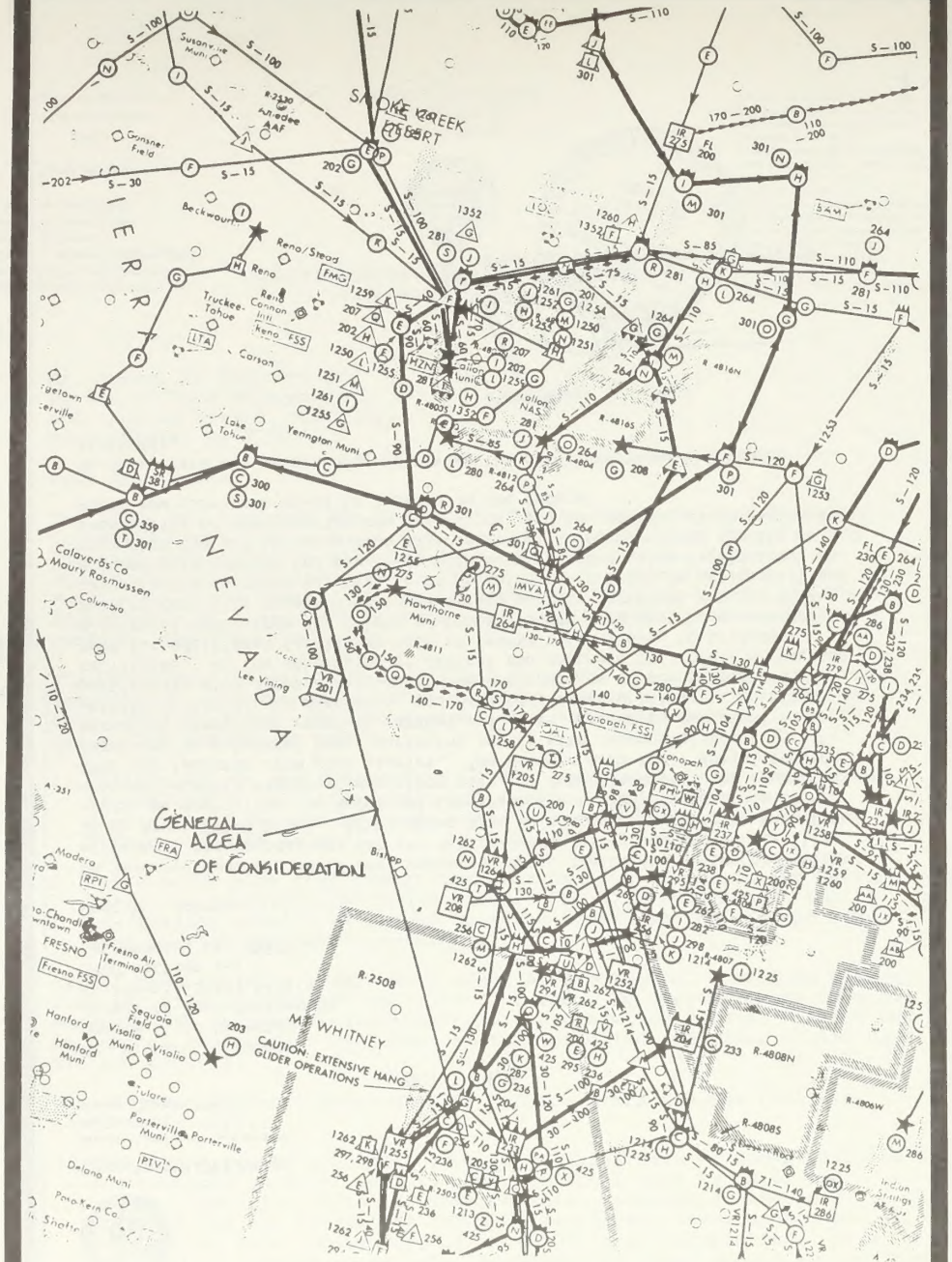
Hours of operation are continuous unless otherwise noted on chart.
NOTE: FSS near the route should be contacted to determine if route is in use.

SPECIAL USE AIRSPACE

- Restricted, Prohibited, etc.
- NUCLEAR POWER PLANT
- RADIOACTIVE WASTE SITE

VFR HELICOPTER REFUELING TRACKS





Response 95.1

There is no specific prohibition of overflight of wilderness by aircraft. Low-flying aircraft can cause disturbance of the solitude of an area. Except in bona fide emergencies, search and rescue efforts and essential military missions such as training flights, low flight would be discouraged. Where low overflight is a problem, or expected to become a problem, wilderness management plans will provide for liaison with proper military authorities, the Federal Aviation Administration, and pilots in the general area in an effort to reduce low flight, if at all possible.

96

Department Of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
P.O. Box 3402
Golden, Colorado 80401

OCT 2 4 1986

Mr. Richard F. Johnson
Deputy State Director
Bureau of Land Management
California State Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Johnson:

We have reviewed the draft environmental impact statement for the preliminary wilderness recommendations for the Benton-Owens Valley and Bodie-Coleville Study Areas (CA-930.16). Although we have no comments specific to any of the areas, we would like the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to continue to consider utility rights-of-way along with the other land uses and resources that are factored into your studies. The Western Area Power Administration (Western) is a Federal power marketing agency with responsibilities for marketing electrical power to various utilities, including municipal utilities, irrigation districts, and privately owned utilities. We often participate with other utilities in the construction of new transmission facilities. As the population of central and southern California grows, the need for additional facilities such as transmission lines, to transport electrical power from the inland southwest to the area must be considered. Western generally tries to follow existing utility corridors but, in a few cases, a new corridor may have to be established in order to efficiently and economically connect the new loads with existing generating facilities. We encourage the BLM to leave room adjacent to existing corridors for the possibility of constructing new facilities, and to consider establishing areas where new corridors could be located in the future.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the draft environmental impact statement.

Sincerely,

for Gary W. Frey
Director of Environmental Affairs

Resources Building
1416 Ninth Street
95814

(916) 445-5656

Department of Conservation
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Forestry
Department of Boating and Waterways
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Water Resources

GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN
GOVERNOR OF
CALIFORNIA

THE RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Air Resources Board
California Coastal Commission
California Conservation Corps
Colorado River Board
Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission
Regional Water Quality Control Boards
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Solid Waste Management Board
State Coastal Conservancy
State Lands Commission
State Reclamation Board
State Water Resources Control Board

NOV 1983
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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

11

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

November 8, 1983

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

The State has reviewed the Draft EIS, Benton-Owens Valley/ Bodie-Coleville Study Areas, submitted through the Office of Planning and Research in accordance with OMB Circular A-95 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Review was coordinated with the Public Utilities Commission, Water Resources Control Board, and the Departments of Conservation, Fish and Game, Forestry, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) supports the proposed wilderness designation, but recommends that certain land uses be restricted on some non-wilderness areas to protect their wildlife values. Specifically, DFG recommends that:

1. Vehicle use on the Independence Creek and Symmes Creek study areas be confined to existing roads and trails. These areas support deer winter use, and reducing vehicle encroachment would reduce stress on these animals.

2. Cerro Gordo Mine road remain open for hunting access to the Cerro Gordo and Southern Inyo study areas. DFG also recommends that no new grazing permits be issued in these areas, so that forage now used by wildlife may be retained.

All of the remaining areas under study have potential conflicts between fish and wildlife habitat and livestock use. To prevent these from occurring, DFG recommends continued close cooperation between BLM and DFG in habitat improvement projects, so that wildlife and other public uses are not reduced.

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board has the following comments to offer:

1. The discussion of potential impacts of wilderness or non-wilderness designations on water quality and beneficial uses is brief and general. Specific, detailed environmental assessments should be prepared for any activities (mining, geothermal development, etc.) carried out as a consequence of non-wilderness designation. As a responsible agency under CEQA, the Regional Board should be notified of any such activities that could affect water quality or uses, and

5-12

11.2

11.1

11.3

11.4

11.5

should review plans or environmental documents to determine if waste discharge requirements would be necessary.

2. The Regional Board has supported wilderness designation for the Slinkard area (CA-010-105/NV-030-531) in Alpine and Mono Counties. The proposed alternative in this document recommends against such status because of the area's potential for mineral and geothermal development and the perceived difficulties in management. The Regional Board continues to support wilderness status as the best protection for water quality on this parcel and surrounding areas.

   State and Federal non-degradation policies apply to all surface waters of the East Fork Carson River and West Walker River systems that would be affected by human activities in the Slinkard area. Waters draining the parcel on the Alpine County side are tributary to a reach of the East Fork Carson that DFG has designated as a wild trout management area and provides potential habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. DFG recommends management of adjacent USFS lands for low-intensity uses to protect the trout habitat, and USFS acquisition of a number of private parcels (DFG East Fork Carson River Wild Trout Management Plan, 1979). If these recommendations are carried out, land use conflicts that might affect management of the Slinkard parcel as wilderness should be considerably reduced. If the Slinkard parcel is not designated wilderness, the Regional Board recommends that it continue to be managed for low-intensity uses that will not result in discharges of sediment or nutrients to surrounding high quality surface waters.

The Department of Transportation has these comments to offer:

1. The report does not discuss the specific impacts of wilderness designations on the use of State highways as boundaries. The report, therefore, does not provide sufficient information to make a decision under NEPA. It is not adequate for the report to refer to the Final Wilderness Management Policy to determine the precise impacts of such designation on State highways, especially since that report is largely silent on these issues.

2. The wilderness proposals have specific but unspecified impacts on State facilities that affect their manageability and conflict with their use. The report should address the impact of wilderness designation on resources adjacent to the proposed wildernesses (i.e., State highways) and on the manageability of those resources, as well as the "inward" focus on manageability of the wilderness areas.

3. State Route 270 (road to Bodie State Park) is bounded on both sides under all alternatives by WSAs 95 and 99. This concerns Caltrans in a significant way, because the Department is slowly upgrading this road to standards after taking it into the State system in recent years. (Caltrans has a statutory obligation to provide access to State parks.) Continued reconstruction from a dirt road to minimum

11.5 cont.

State standards may include some realignment. The report should address the impact of making this road the boundary between two wildernesses.

State Route 120 is used as the southeast boundary of WSA 090 under all alternatives. The impact of the proposals should be described. Under the "All Wilderness" alternative, the following routes are impacted:

Route 167 as the northern boundary of WSA 88.
Route 120 as the southeastern boundary of WSA 90.
Route 167 as the northern boundary of WSA 92.
Route 395 as the western boundary of WSA 99.
Route 182 as the western boundary of WSA 102.
Route 89 as the northeastern boundary of WSA 105.

Attached is a copy of Caltrans's comments on the Draft Wilderness Management Policy. Very few of the problems discussed in these comments have been resolved in the Final WMP. Therefore, the impacts on State highways from using them as boundaries for wilderness areas are, in Caltrans's view, rather severe and unmitigated. Caltrans recommends, therefore, that the boundaries of wilderness areas be drawn back at least 100 feet from the edge of pavement where there is only a prescriptive right or 50 feet from the right-of-way. This would allow Caltrans to conduct necessary maintenance and repairs and make essential safety improvements (curve realignments, pavement rehabilitation, drainage reconstruction).

11.6

4. Caltrans appreciates the cooperation of BLM in modifying wilderness boundaries to accommodate the request for continuing access to sand and gravel material sites. The alternatives included in this DEIS affect material site 216W in Area 090. The minerals evaluation under GEM should consider the costs to the public if material sites are lost to Caltrans use. These costs are in the form of added transportation costs from hauling longer distances from alternative sites and additional congestion and hazards of heavy trucks. BLM should also include an estimate of the quantities potentially lost if included within a wilderness.

11.7

5. The report should discuss the implications for Caltrans repairs under emergency conditions and the handling of accidents to motorists if highways are used as boundaries.

Sincerely,

Gordon F. Snow

GORDON F. SNOW, Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Resources

(SCH 82111503)
Attachment

Response 11.1

The Benton-Owens Valley Motor Vehicle Use Designations (October 1983) limit vehicle use to existing roads and trails in these areas.

Response 11.2

The Cerro Gordo to New York Butte Road would remain open, thus providing access to hunters, recreationists, and others. Your request regarding the issuance of grazing permits is not within the scope of this wilderness EIS. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP does not currently authorize grazing in the Southern Inyo and Cerro Gordo areas.

Response 11.3

For each WSA an issue concerning the impacts of wilderness designation or nondesignation on water quality was considered. Generally one of the following three situations applied to an individual WSA: 1) there were no projected activities or management actions that would result in impacts to water quality with the existing use levels, including motorized vehicle use and livestock grazing, remaining unchanged or with only slight increases projected; 2) projected surface-disturbing activities such as mineral/energy development would not be located adjacent to or near perennial water sources or streams; and 3) potential impact-causing activities such as mineral development would occur under a No Wilderness scenario or under a Wilderness scenario as a result of anticipated valid existing rights and would not vary between the Proposed Action and Alternatives. See Identification of Issues on pages 1-5 through 1-37 for discussion of impacts on water quality for each specific WSA. Additionally, the assessments in this EIS are based on planning projections of actions that could reasonably be expected to occur within a particular WSA. While these projections and assessments are not anticipated to result in potential impacts, an actual proposal for development including mineral/energy resource development would be analyzed prior to implementation to determine actual impacts. The BLM along with other agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of California would develop an array of specific mitigation measures to assure water quality is maintained at levels established by Federal and State laws.

Response 11.4

See page 1-54 for a discussion of the selection of the Proposed Action for the Slinkard WSA and the rationale for recommending the WSA as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. Your recommendation to manage the Slinkard parcel for low-intensity uses relates to the Bodie-Coleville Management Framework Plan, and thus, is not within the scope of this EIS.

Response 11.5

The Proposed Action and Partial Wilderness Alternative now allow for corridors along State- and County-maintained roads (200 feet on each side of existing centerline) and other roads (50 feet on each side of existing centerline), where wilderness recommendations parallel roads, to allow for road maintenance, repairs, and reconstruction needs. Chapter 4 now includes an overall discussion of impacts relative to wilderness boundaries adjoining roads under Alternative II and specifically addresses road boundary-related impacts to potential realignment needs of State Route 270 for CA-010-095 and 099 under Alternatives I, II, and III.

Response 11.6

Sand and gravel material sites are within rights-of-way which have valid existing rights. They would not be affected under the All Wilderness Alternative.

Response 11.7

The Wilderness Management Policy (Chapter III.K.4) provides for the use of motorized equipment and mechanical transport required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area.

3

COUNTY OF INYO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COURTHOUSE
INDEPENDENCE, CALIFORNIA 93526

October 25, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner Jr., District Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

3.1 Inyo County has reviewed and evaluated the Draft EIS, Wilderness Recommendation For The Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie Coleville Study Areas, Bakersfield District, California. This BLM Program unfortunately has been conducted differently from other BLM programs, in that the wilderness program has been conspicious by the absence of coordination between BLM staff and members of Inyo County staff. During the process of both BLM California Desert Plan and BLM Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan, the County of Inyo was invited to actively participate in the formulation process of the plans. In the instance of the wilderness plan, we do not recall being invited to coordinate with any of the BLM staff listed as preparers on page LP-1 during the formulation process.

3.2 We still find our comments made on February 5, 1980 to former State Director, James B. Ruch concerning the "Final Intensive Wilderness Inventory Report" to still generally be appropriate now. In our February 1980 letter of comment we stated WSA's CA-010-055, 010-062, 010-080, 010-081 and 010-056 (except 13,000 acres) should not be recommended for wilderness since wilderness inventory analysis previously done by BLM have stated these areas do not meet designated wilderness qualities and should be eliminated from further study.

3.3 We find our comments stated in Resolution No. 80-99 and letter of September 16, 1980 concerning the 13,000 acres of WSA CA-010-56 to be appropriate today. The resource data generated by BLM in the Benton-Owens Valley Study Area does not appear to justify the placement of these lands into wilderness designation. The proposed BLM wilderness plan is also inconsistent with the adopted Conservation and Open Space Elements of the Inyo County General Plan.

As a result, the Inyo County Board of Supervisors oppose Alternative I (Proposed Action), Alternative II (All Wilderness) and III (Partial Wilderness) of the Draft EIS Wilderness Recommendation For Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area.

3.4 The Board of Supervisors recognize the presence of three WSA's on the Inyo Mountains being proposed by BLM as wilderness. Two of the WSA's are the above mentioned WSA's in the Benton-Owens Valley proposal. The other WSA is proposed by the California Desert Planning Area administered by the BLM Riverside District. The creation of these three areas into wilderness would place a severe hardship upon the mining and livestock industries of the County.

As a result the Board of Supervisors, recognizing this issue, wish to express again to BLM their continued opposition toward the placement of wilderness areas upon the Inyo Mountains.

The Board of Supervisors also reserves the right to express their opinion in the future toward other Federal Government wilderness proposals; whether they be from BLM, Forest Service, National Park Service etc.

Yours truly,

Robert Bremmer, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

Attachments: February 5, 1980 letter to Mr. Ruch
Resolution No. 80-99
Benton Owens Valley Land Use Recommendations May 1980.

RESOLUTION NO. 83-88

RESOLUTION OF INYO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESPONDING TO THE BLM DRAFT EIS WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BENTON-OWENS VALLEY/BODIE COLEVILLE STUDY AREAS OF AUGUST 12, 1983

WHEREAS, The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires the preparation and completion of a comprehensive long-range plan for the management, use, development and protection of the lands administered by BLM including those of the Benton-Owens Valley Planning Unit; and

WHEREAS, Section 603(a) of FLPMA requires the BLM to conduct a study as to the suitability or non suitability of wilderness recommendations to Congress; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Department have coordinated with BLM in the Benton-Owens Valley Planning program concerning land use, grazing, transportation routes, wilderness and other associated Federal plans involving the Public Lands administered by BLM, in the Owens Valley since 1979; and

WHEREAS, Alternate I "Proposed Action", Alternate II "All Wilderness" and Alternate III "Partial Wilderness" of the Draft EIS Wilderness Recommendations for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas, Bakersfield District of August 12, 1983 recommend the creation of wilderness areas of varing acreages; and

WHEREAS, Alternatives I, II, and III of the Draft EIS Wilderness Recommendations For Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas of August 12, 1983 is in conflict and is inconsistent with both the drafts of the BLM Benton/ Conservation and Open Space Elements of the Inyo County General Plan of June 2, 1981. and

WHEREAS, Wilderness Study Area 122 of the California Desert Plan, located on the east slope of the Inyo Mountains and is adjacent to the Benton-Owens Valley Wilderness Study Areas on the west slope of the Inyo Mountains.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Inyo County Board of Supervisors oppose Alternative I (Proposed Action), Alternative II (All Wilderness) and III (Partial Wilderness) of the Draft EIS Wilderness Recommendation for Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Inyo County Board of Supervisors oppose the designation of Wilderness Study Area 122 of the California Desert Planning Area to be created a wilderness area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution and accompanied enclosure be sent to Senators Cranston, Wilson, Congressman Lewis, Secretary of the Interior Designate Clark and BLM Director Buford.

Passed and adopted this 25th day of October ,1983

AYES: Supervisors Johnson, Cook, Bremmer and Calkins
NOES: None
ABSENT: Supervisor Irwin

ATTEST:

Mike Hanford
Board Clerk

by
Deputy

Robert Bremmer, Chairman
Inyo County Board of Supervisors

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Owens
Ping BLM file, Lewis, other
Date 10/25/83

Response 3.1

On December 3, 1982, a wilderness study announcement and mailing list renewal notice were sent to over 500 people on the Bakersfield District wilderness mailing list. The announcement described the current study effort, giving details on the areas under consideration, the planning process, and opportunities for public involvement. Copies of the announcement were specifically sent to the County Board of Supervisors and the Planning Department. In addition, a media release with similar information was issued the same day. Two local newspapers - The Sierra Daily News and the Inyo Register - contained the release. Finally, a Federal Register notice announcing the availability of planning criteria for public review was published on February 25, 1983.

Response 3.2

The Final Intensive Inventory Report, dated December 1979, identifies the areas noted in the letter as possessing the requisite wilderness characteristics for designation as Wilderness Study Areas.

Response 3.3

Prior to the implementation of the Bureau's formal wilderness study process, the Benton-Owens Valley Management Framework Plan (MFP) analysis considered wilderness as a land use element during the planning process. However, the final publication of the Benton-Owens Valley MFP (June, 1982) stated that any "wilderness decisions associated with the Benton-Owens Valley planning area are deferred until completion . . . of the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness MFP Amendment scheduled for fiscal year 1983." Thus,the Benton-Owens Valley MFP wilderness recommendations (13,000 acres for WSA CA-010-056) did not, in actuality, constitute final recommendations.

In December of 1982, the formal wilderness study process for the Benton-Owens Valley MFP Amendment was initiated. All the WSAs were reviewed and analyzed based upon their wilderness characteristics and resource conflicts. The final recommendations resulted in 27,420 acres of WSA CA-010-056 being recommended as suitable for wilderness, which is only partially (13,000 acres) consistent with the Open Space and Conservation Element of Inyo County's General Plan.

For further information concerning consistency with other plans see page 5-5, Chapter 5 - Consultation and Coordination.

Response 3.4

In Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences, resource values that are identified as issues for each WSA including mineral development, geothermal development, and livestock grazing, where appropriate, are analyzed to determine the impact of wilderness designation or nondesignation. The Proposed Actions for the Cerro Gordo WSA and the Southern Inyo WSA do not identify any mineral or geothermal energy development that would be foregone. Additionally livestock grazing is not presently authorized for either of these WSAs.

56

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DRAWER L • INDEPENDENCE • CALIFORNIA 93526
(619) 878-2411 (Ext. 306, 307, 318)

County of
INYO

TED HILTON
Planning Director

December 7, 1983

DEC 1983
RECEIVED
U.S. DEPT. INTERIOR
BUREAU LAND MGMNT.
BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner Jr., District Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Subject: Summary of testimony made before the Bakersfield District Advisory December 2, 1983

Dear Bob:

In my presentation before the Bakersfield District Advisory Council on December 2, 1983, I mentioned the principal objections to the proposed Wilderness Recommendations of the Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville Study Areas (Wilderness amendment) by Inyo County.

56.1 The County's objections discussed by myself concerned three technical points. First, the County is of the opinion that the Federal Government has proposed too many wilderness areas in Inyo County. We further perceive "criteria #2b) of the BLM regulations (Balancing Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas) has not been adequately considered as intended by Congress.

56.2 Our second objection concerns the adverse cumulative impacts upon the local economy through the establishment of more wilderness areas. Standard #5 of the BLM regulations requires an analysis that addresses these impacts.

56.3 The third objection of the County concerns the inconsistancy of the wilderness amendment with the adopted Conservation and Open Space Element of the Inyo County General Plan. The wilderness amendment is also inconsistant with the draft Benton-Owens Valley Framework plans of September 26, 1979 and May of 1980. Standard #6 of the BLM regulations requires BLM staff to consider other Federal, State and local plans. The intent is to achieve consistancy with other agency plans.

56.4 Inyo County is the second largest county in area in California with approximately 6,490,000 acres. Public agencies own approximately 6,386,000 acres or about 98.7 percent of the County land area.

BLM, Forest Service and National Park Service are proposing to add additional wilderness areas to the National Wilderness System. The establishment of new wilderness areas to the existing wilderness system in Inyo County would increase the total wilderness acreage to approximately 4 million acres or 60 percent of the total County area. Further, the Naval Weapons Center has a withdrawl of approximately ½ million acres in the County for National defense purposes. The mission of the center must deny public access from the land. The result is an additional 7 percent of land locked off from public access.

56.4 cont. The County contends that it has received more than a fair share of wilderness when compared to other local jurisdictions statewide. We are of the opinion the Federal Government should distribute future additions of the National Wilderness system on a more equitable basis. The creation of more wilderness in Inyo County will have an adverse impact on the economy by impacting the recreational, mining and agricultural industries of the County.

56.5 Finally the Board of Supervisors early in the BLM Planning Process directed the County Planning Department and the citizen advisory committees to help coordinate with the BLM Bishop Area office in formulating their planning documents. The result of this close interaction between agencies and member of the public resulted in the Draft Benton-Owens Valley Framework Plan of BLM recommending the establishment of a 13,000 acre wilderness area. The County of Inyo incorporated the boundaries of this BLM recommendation into its adopted conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan.

56.6 It is my understanding the December 2, 1983 Resolution of the BLM Bakersfield District Advisory Council consisted of a recommendation eliminating WSA CA-010-055 (Cerro Gordo) from any further consideration as a wilderness area. The Council further recommended WSA CA-010-056 (Southern Inyo) be revised. The western boundary be made consistent with the "County Boundary" (6,000 foot contour) and the southern boundary to be the Long John Canyon Trail.

The Inyo County Planning Department wishes to go on record supporting this Council Resolution.

Sincerely,

Ted Hilton
Planning Director

TH:sm

Response 56.1

Since the release of the Draft EIS, the Proposed Action has been modified with respect to the Cerro Gordo WSA. Please see page 1-39 and page 1-41 for further information on the selection of the Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA and the Southern Inyo WSA. Geographic distribution of wilderness was considered during the wilderness study process. However, it was determined that the wilderness values of the WSAs recommended suitable were diverse and significant enough to outweigh this consideration; the NWPS would be enhanced by the designation of these areas as wilderness.

Response 56.2

During the scoping process which included public involvement, impact upon the local economy was not raised as an issue or concern. In response to this comment, the Proposed Actions for the WSAs in Inyo County (Cerro Gordo WSA, CA-010-055 and Southern Inyo WSA, CA-010-056) were reviewed to determine if any projected resource development activities would be precluded. Since the Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA does not recommend the WSA for wilderness designation, no potential resource development activities would be precluded. The Proposed Action for the Southern Inyo WSA does recommend a portion of the WSA (27,420 acres) for wilderness designation. Wilderness designation would preclude development of mineral and energy resources on this portion of the WSA unless valid existing rights can be determined. However, even though there is a moderate potential for nonmetallic minerals the development potential is considered low and no exploration or development of mineral or energy resources is projected within the WSA. In this FEIS, impacts on mineral development was considered an issue for the WSA and is assessed for the Proposed Action and each alternative in Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences. The remaining 9,180 acres of the WSA does have a high potential for metallic minerals which would be available for development under the Proposed Action. Additionally, the WSA historically has not been identified for livestock grazing use. The Proposed Actions for the WSAs in Inyo County would not preclude any existing uses. Additionally, the WSAs would be available for development of minerals with a high potential for occurrence. Therefore, no impacts on the Inyo County economy are projected as a result of the BLM's Proposed Actions.

Response 56.3

Consistency with other State and local plans has been considered. Narratives addressing this element are included on pages 5-__ and 5-__ in Chapter 5 - Consultation and Coordination. The draft Benton-Owens Valley MFP included draft wilderness recommendations developed in advance of the BLM's final Wilderness Study Policy. The final Benton-Owens Valley MFP deferred the wilderness study pending release of formal wilderness study guidance.

Response 56.4

See Responses 56.1 and 56.2.

Response 56.5

See Response 56.3.

Response 56.6

Although the BLM Bakersfield District Advisory Council did recommend WSA CA-010-055 and the portion of WSA CA-010-056 south of Long John Canyon Trail as nonsuitable, it did not recommend modifying the west boundary of the proposed suitable area.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DRAWER L • INDEPENDENCE • CALIFORNIA 93526
(619) 878-2411 *(Ext. 306, 307, 318)*

TED HILTON
Planning Director

County of
INYO

December 12, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner Jr., District Manager
Bureau of Land Managment, Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Subject: Further comment regarding Proposed Wilderness Recommendations of Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville Study Areas EIS.

Dear Bob:

61.1 The western boundaries of both Map 16A "South Inyo MGT Area Land Status & Use Decisions" of the adopted BLM Benton/Owens Valley Management Framework Plan of June 1982 and the ORV Designation Area #10 (southern Inyo Mountains) of the Motor Vehicle Use Designations are not consistant with the western boundaries of CA-010-055 and CA-010-056 of Map 2-b "Alternative 1 Proposed Action of the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness EIS.

The Inyo County Planning Department as stated in previously submitted comments, would support a wilderness area in CA-010-056, providing the western boundary was the 6000 foot contour south to the intersection of the Long John Canyon Trail, with this trail becoming the south boundary.

Sincerely,

Ted Hilton

Ted Hilton
Planning Director

TH:sm

Response 61.1

The ORV Designation Area No. 10 refers to prescribed motor vehicle use limitations for that area. The vehicle use designations originated from the Benton-Owens Valley planning effort and were completed prior to this wilderness study effort. The designations have little or no bearing on the wilderness suitability recommendations. Map 16-A displayed in the Benton-Owens Valley MFP depicts a management area which was designed to facilitate land use planning and administration. Thus, it has no relevance to the wilderness study process. See also Response 2.1.

Building & Planning Department

Rooms 105-111 Courthouse - County Civic Center - Visalia, CA 93291

Building Permits (209) 733-6281 Planning (209) 733-6254

December 14, 1983

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

ATTN: Robert D. Rheiner, District Manager

SUBJECT: Preliminary Wilderness Recommendations for the Benton-Owens Valley/ Bodie-Colevelle Study Areas - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

The Tulare County Building and Planning Department has reviewed the above referenced document and have the following comments to offer.

67.1 As you are aware, the only Wilderness Study Area (WSA) discussed in the EIS, which is located in Tulare County, is Sacatar Meadows (CA-010-027). The Sacatar Meadows area is 18,175 acres in size, the majority of which is located in Tulare County (17,535 acres). The balance of the area (640 acres) lies within Inyo County. The proposed action (Alternative I) identifies the majority of Sacatar Meadows (11,447 acres) as suitable for wilderness. The remaining 6,728 acres is identified as nonsuitable.

It has been a long standing position of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors that the remaining federal land in Tulare County, not now devoted to wilderness, be available for productive, multiple use. This includes such activities as timber production, mining, intensive grazing and various forms of non-wilderness oriented recreation.

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors previously reviewed, in January 1980, the Bureau of Land Management's "Final Intensive Wilderness Inventory (1979)" and adopted Resolution No. 80-256 (attached) specifically opposing the WSA designation being applied to approximately 54,000 acres of public land in Tulare County, which included Sacatar Meadows.

Eugene E. Smith, Director - George E. Finney, Assistant Director

In conclusion, we would comment that the opportunities for solitude/primitive recreation and effective wilderness management are significantly hampered in Sacatar Meadows (even in conjunction with the adjacent California Desert Conservation Area) because of its narrow shape, the existence of non-public land "fingers" which extend into the unit and the proximity of the western boundary to outside influences (i.e. Kennedy Meadows Road and other roads and development around Kennedy Meadows).

Based upon the issues set forth above, it is recommended that the "No-Wilderness" alternative (Alternative IV) be approved for Sacatar Meadows, in lieu of the "Proposed Action" (Alternative I).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

TULARE COUNTY BUILDING AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Eugene E. Smith, Director

Michael Heinzen, Division Head
Foothill & Mountain Planning Division

MH:ma

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF TULARE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of)
Wilderness Study.) RESOLUTION NO. 80-256

Upon motion of Supervisor Harrell, seconded by Supervisor Swiney, this Board does hereby oppose the designation of the following area as wilderness:

Sheep Ridge, north of Three Rivers along the North Fork of the Kaweah River (CA-010-022, 4905 acres); Milk Ranch/Case Mountain which includes 6 parcels also in the Balch Park Road and north of the Middle Fork of the Tule River (CA-010-025, 558 acres); Ownes Peak, south of Kennedy Meadows Road and east of Canebrake Road (CA-010-026, approximately 5,000 acres); Sacatar Meadows, east of Kennedy Meadows Road and west of Inyo County line (CA-010-027, 8,938 acres); and Rockhouse west of Kennedy Meadows and Canebrake Roads and east of Sequoia National Forest (CA-010-029, 28,000 acres)

The foregoing resolution was adopted at an official meeting of the Board of Supervisors held January 29, 1980, by the following vote:

Ayes: Supervisors Gould, Hillman, Harrell, Swiney and Muller.
Noes: None.
Absent: None.

Response 67.1

The manageability problems you referred to have been resolved for the most part, through boundary modifications in the Proposed Action. See page 1-39 for discussion of the selection of the Proposed Action for the Sacatar Meadows WSA existing livestock grazing levels would be maintained under the Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness). Additionally, there are no mineral development activities anticipated within the WSA due to the projected low potential of mineral resources.

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF 4WD CLUBS INC.

5831 Rosebud Lane, Unit M-1
Sacramento, CA 95841
(916) 338-4540

DEC 1983
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BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

December 7, 1983

Bureau of Land Management
Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr., District Manager
800 Truxton Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

The Draft E.I.S. for Benton-Owens, Bodie-Coleville wilderness recommendations has been reviewed. We do not entirely concur with the areas recommended for wilderness designations as follows:

53.1 Sacatar Meadows- (CA-010-027) 18,175 acres. This area would be reduced in size to 11,447 acres in order to provide more manageable boundaries. We point out that the wilderness attributes of this area are very much dependent upon a similar designation of CDCA USA #157, which is contiguous to the eastern boundary of the Sacatar Meadows area. It appears only reasonable to expect that both areas 027 and 157 should be judged together and not under separate studies. The area is also in close proximity to established wilderness areas, and because of this situation, it is most important only those areas that rank the highest in wilderness suitability should be considered for wilderness. In our opinion, the DEIS should have also provided some form of numerical rating factors for comparision of values with existing nearby wilderness areas.

53.2 Cerro Gordo - (CA-010-055) 16,102 acres. The DEIS recommends only 1,880 acres be deleted, leaving 14,222 acres recommended as suitable for wilderness. We do not concur with this recommendation since we believe the 4WD road to New York Butte and other evidences of mining and mineral exploration northward should be deleted from this area. The potential threat of extensive wilderness in the adjoining roadless areas CDCA-120 through 127 makes it equally important that only the best suited and highest qualified lands be selected for wilderness consideration. In this particular case, we believe some other form of land classification can be used to protect its back country atmosphere, at the same time providing for existing motorized vehicle access and future mineral exploration. It is not a matter of whether or not an area is suitable for wilderness, but just how much land can we afford to set aside in any given part of the state without effecting the well being and economy of its residents. It is abundantly clear that local goverment and its citizens are not in favor

of this area being made wilderness.

53.3 Southern Inyo- (CA-010-056) 36,600 acres. The DEIS recommends only 27,420 acres be considered for wilderness. We contend the entire area should be dropped from any further consideration as it is extensively documented with marks of mankind, abandoned mining sites, salt trams and primitive roads and trails. Existing access routes should be left open to motorized vehicles for recreational opportunities, mineral exploration and development.

The remaining areas discussed in the report have been carefully evaluated and we concur with its findings. It is our opinion that the DEIS reflects a well prepared and extensive study of the areas involved. The fact that we do not agree its draft recommendations is to be expected when dealing with lands that are in our opinion only marginally qualified for wilderness consideration. The abundance of existing wilderness, plus the potential of much more extensive wilderness in the nearby CDCA, makes it imperative we only consider the highest qualified lands in this area for wilderness.

Sincerely,

Ed Dunkley

Ed Dunkley,
Administrator

ED:mb

Response 53.1

As Chapter 2 of the Final EIS indicates, the suitable recommendation for Sacatar Meadows (CA-010-027) is contingent upon the adjacent CDCA WSA 157. Legislative mandates resulted in acceleration of the CDCA Wilderness Study in order to meet Desert Plan completion deadlines. The contingency stipulations for Sacatar Meadows now ensures joint consideration of the two units. With respect to numerical ratings, the Wilderness Study Policy, which contains the criteria for determining wilderness suitability, does not provide for assigning numerical values (for comparison purposes) to WSAs or existing local wilderness areas.

Response 53.2

The Proposed Action has been modified since the release of the DEIS. Please see the Chapter 2 recommendation rationale for further information.

Response 53.3

The marks of mankind, abandoned mining sites, and primitive vehicle routes were taken into account during the wilderness study process. These imprints are considered to be substantially unnoticeable in the area as a whole and are relatively insignificant in light of the area's overall size, ruggedness, and naturalness. The Saline Valley Salt Tram is a historical value that essentially supplements and benefits the WSA's wilderness values.

CALIFORNIA MINING ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 3 / Jackson, Ca. 95642 / (209) 223-1129

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December 2, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

The California Mining Association has reviewed the draft environmental statement of wilderness recommendations for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas. 39.1

The California Mining Association strongly supports Alternative IV, No Wilderness (no action).

Strong mineralization is present in all the areas under consideration, either by past mining activity or present mining activity.

The strong presence of geothermal can not be ignored as the development of alternate energy is a national policy and the areas must remain open for exploration and possible development.

Your favorable consideration of the California Mining Association's position in support of Alternative IV, No Wilderness (no action) would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ray B. Hunter

Ray B. Hunter
Executive Director

RBH/bb

Response 39.1

As the EIS indicates, mineral resource potential and the degree of present mining activity varies from WSA to WSA. Current mineral values and mineral development potential were taken into account during the wilderness study process. See Chapter 3 for minerals-related data.

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER

CNPS

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION
OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

P.O. Box 330
Lone PineCA, 93545
December 17, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager, Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Ave, Room 302
Bakersfield CA, 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the wilderness suitability and nonsuitability recommendations for 19 Wilderness Study Areas in the Bishop-Caliente Resource Areas of the Bakersfield District and the Walker Resource Area of the Carson City District of Nevada.

We are supportive of your Proposed Action.

We would otherwise prefer Alternative III, but recognize you have management problems in the additional areas which would make this Alternative impractical at this time. Maybe later.

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to review and comment upon this Draft EIS.

Yours very truly,

Vincent Yoder

Vincent Yoder, Legislative Chair
Bristlecone Chapter
California Native Plant Society

Defenders OF WILDLIFE

75

December 17, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxton Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, California 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

Defenders of Wildlife submits this letter as our brief comments and recommendations on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the 19 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the Bishop, Caliente, and Walker Resource Areas.

While we strongly support the WSAs recommended as suitable for wilderness designation under the Proposed Action (Alternative I), we believe this alternative does not recognize the wilderness values of other important WSAs. Ideally, we prefer Alternative II, to find all 19 WSAs suitable for wilderness designation. Of course, we recognize that BLM often receives competing input and conflicting views on wilderness recommendations. Since the prospects of BLM supporting Alternative II are remote, we would at least hope that Alternative III, Partial Wilderness, would receive BLM support. 75.1

We believe that all 19 WSAs possess significant wildlife and other natural values. These values would benefit from wilderness protection. For example, the Southern Inyo WSA provides critically important bighorn sheep habitat, along with prairie falcon nesting sites, two rare plants, and unique subalpine forest habitat. This WSA is also adjacent to approximately 50,000 acres of proposed BLM wilderness in the California desert in the Inyo Mountains, plus another 140,000 acres of roadless land being studied by the Forest Service.

The Sacatar Meadows WSA is adjacent to another WSA recommended for wilderness, and provides important habitat for two rare plants, deer, and upland game.

The Slinkard WSA is adjacent to the Carson-Iceberg roadless areas, and has peregrine falcon nesting sites and key fawning and winter habitat for deer.

1244 NINETEENTH STREET, NW • WASHINGTON, DC 20036 • (202) 659-9510

Thank you very much for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Richard Spotts

Richard Spotts
California Representative
Defenders of Wildlife

5604 Rosedale Way
Sacramento, CA 95822
(916) 442-6386

RS/js

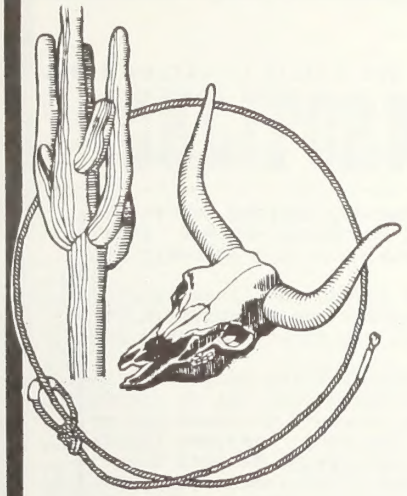
Response 75.1

As identified in the FEIS, the Southern Inyo and Cerro Gordo WSAs contain habitat infrequently used by desert bighorn sheep as they drift over from their nearby winter range. These WSAs are not considered primary habitat for these wildlife species. These wildlife values are, however, considered special features and were subject to an analysis to identify potential impacts to their populations and habitats. It was determined that a lack of projected resource activities along the ridgetops would result in no change to these populations or habitat. Additionally, a bighorn sheep reintroduction program is proposed for the area which would not be precluded under a wilderness designation. Thus, the reintroduction was not considered an issue affecting wilderness values.

The prairie falcon is considered a special feature of the WSA. Due to a lack of projected resource conflicts, it was determined that the prairie falcon and its habitat would be unaffected, thus precluding it as an issue.

Through recent observations and inventory actions, it has been determined that prairie falcon nest sites are not located in the WSA.

18



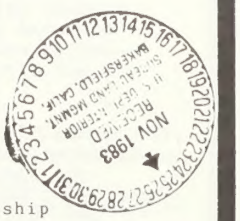
Date: November 21, 1983

To: Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District Office
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, California 93301

From: Desert Survivors
234 La Espiral
Orinda, California 94563

Re: WSA #CA-010-056 (Southern Inyo)
WSA #CA-010-055 (Cerro Gordo)

DESERT SURVIVORS



Dear BLM,

18.1

This letter is to urge you, on behalf of the membership of Desert Survivors, to recommend all 36,000 acres of the Southern Inyo WSA, and all 16,102 acres of the Cerro Gordo WSA, as suitable for wilderness.

Desert Survivors bases its recommendation on 1) a review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, 2) our own thorough knowledge of both WSAs.

While some compromises may have to be made, the Proposed Action excludes major portions of both WSAs from wilderness recommendation. Most distressing to us the the exclusion of one-quarter of the Southern Inyo WSA under the Proposed Action. We have found the resource conflicts described in the Draft EIS to be minimal. The acreage which would be excluded is, for the most part, acreage which posesses the requsite wilderness characteristics.

The Southern Inyo WSA, along with Desert District WSA #122, comprise one of the BLM's prime wilderness candidates. The removal of a major protion of this area from wilderness recommendation is unreasonable and unnecessary.

Desert Survivors urges you to include all of the Southern Inyo and Cerro Gordo WSAs in your wilderness recommendation.

Yours truly,

Desert Survivors, by Doug Kari, President

Response 18.1

The modified Proposed Action of this Final EIS, relative to the Southern Inyo and Cerro Gordo WSAs, is based on a combination of factors. Resource conflicts stemmed from mineral and geothermal potentials ranging from moderate to high. In addition, some manageability problems were present. See pages 1-38 through 1-54 for a discussion of the Selection of the Proposed Action and Development of Alternatives for both the Cerro Gordo WSA and the Southern Inyo WSA..

ECOLOGY CENTER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Project of Educational Communications, Inc.
P.O. Box 35473, Los Angeles, CA 90035

Telephone: (213) 559-9160

December 5, 1983

Robert Rheiner Jr., Distr. Mgr.
Bakersfield Distr.
800 Truxtun Ave., #302
Bakersfield, Ca. 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

48.1 We note that the BLM has issued a draft environmental impact statement for 19 Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono and Alpine counties which designates suitable for wilderness only some small portions of 3 of the WSA's. We wish to protest this.

We recommend Alternative 2, the all-wilderness. We feel that only by studying all 19 areas in detail can your department make proper decisions on the wilderness values of these wild areas, which contain deer, upland game, rare plants, bighorn sheep habitat, prairie falcon nesting sites, tule elk, cultural resources -- rock rings, lithic scatters, petroglyphs in the Benton range, for example. Here also are nesting sites for eagles. Pronghorn antelope, wild horses, raptor nesting areas east of Mono Lake. The Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie Colevill areas all are in grave need of protection.

We urge a more comprehensive environmental stewardship for these areas, and trust our comments will be read into the record.

Sincerely,

Elaine Stansfield

Elaine Stansfield
Assistant Director

Note: Future Environmental Impact Statements should propose total of 290,216 acres for Wilderness Designation.

Response 48.1

See Response 20.1.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
1045 SANSOME STREET SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA 94111
(415) 433-7373

December 14, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager, Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, California 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

70.1 Friends of the Earth strongly recomends Alternative Two for the Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties. The WSA's in the region that are not currently recommended by the Bureau for Wilderness designation encompass important wildlife habitat for rare or endangered plants and animals as well as winter habitat for game species. Archeological sites, including camp sites and petroglyphs, also exist on some of the lands not recommended for Wilderness. Important habitat and archeological sites demand protection that Wilderness management provides.

Additionally, all of the areas are wild and scenic and offer the quickly vanishing resource of wilderness recreation to a growing population. Not only are there more people making recreation demands on shrinking wild acreage, but an increasingly urban population has an ever-growing thirst for a chance to get away from the hectic pace of their daily lifestyles.

With increasing demand on the resource, Wilderness designation for the 19 WSA's east of the central Sierra will help augment and enhance the protective management of other Wilderness and roadless areas in the region and will help keep the ecosystem of the basin and range country of California intact.

The time to manage wild lands to protect their best qualities is while those qualities still exist. Waiting until the demand for a particular wilderness experience increases will be too late--the land's pristine qualities will have been eroded away. The largest public's good--the public not yet born--will best be served by saving as much of the earth, intact, as we can.

By recommending all of the nineteen WSA's in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties for Wilderness, the Bureau can help save areas significant for their beauty, wilderness recreation potential, history, and habitat. Future generations as well as friends of the earth today, will thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Marotta-Jaenecke

Jim Marotta-Jaenecke
Assistant to the Chairman

Response 70.1

Resource values of WSAs such as rare and endangered plants, wildlife species and habitat, and archaeological sites were identified as special features in the FEIS. An assessment was made to identify projected impacts to these special features by various resource activities such as mining, grazing, etc. Where projected impacts to these special features were likely to occur, they were identified as issues and analyzed under a range of alternatives including All Wilderness, No Wilderness, and Partial Wilderness. Thus, the benefits and adverse impacts to special features were described for each alternative. In some cases, wilderness designation would not necessarily protect these special features any better than a nonwilderness designation. In other cases, increased levels of protection under a wilderness designation would benefit special features. See pages 1-5 through 1-37 for a discussion concerning the identification of issues for each WSA. Also see Chapter 3 - Affected Environment for descriptions of the resource values including special features.

64

Dec. 9, 1893

Mr. Robert Rheiner Jr.
District Manager BLM
800 Truxtun Ave. Rm 302
Bakersfield, Ca. 93545

Bear Mr. Rheiner,

I am writing in the capacity of Conservation Chairman of the Eastern Sierra Chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our membership slightly exceeds one hundred people, all of whom urge and encourage the BLM in its wilderness designation of the Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo and Sacatar Meadows regions. Many of our members utilize parts of these areas regularly and are familiar with their value. We are supporting these designations from a "hands on" experience.

Thank you for any and all you can do in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Walter

Jeanne Walter
Conservation Chairman
Eastern Sierra Chapter
National Audubon Society

SIERRA CLUB

Southern California Regional Conservation Committee

2410 Beverly Blvd. #2
Los Angeles, CA 90057

December 19, 1983

Mr. Robert Rheiner Jr.
BLM District Manager
800 Truxton Ave. Rm.302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

81.1 The Southern California Regional Conservation Committee, representing all the Southern California Sierra Club chapters, supports your proposal of Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo and Sacatar as future wilderness. We feel this is a minimum proposal since it represents less than 20% of the originally studied areas.

Southern Inyo is of the highest importance, being one of the finest wildernesses in the state, and is used regularly by our members. Since it will adjoin CDCA wilderness its integrity must be preserved.

Grazing and mineral potential are small concerns in these three areas. Recommendations to the Secretary will lead to mineral studies that will aid in final discussions. Without recommendations it is assumed that intensive mineral studies will not take place.

Again we strongly support your proposal of wilderness status for Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo and Sacatar.

Sincerely,

Judy Anderson

Judy Anderson
Chair
Southern California Regional Conservation Committee

JA:vs

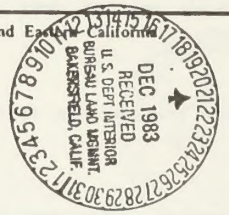
Response 81.1

Your comments have been considered in the Final EIS analysis. The Proposed Action has been modified with respect to the Cerro Gordo WSA. See page 1-39 for discussion concerning selection of the Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA.

SIERRA CLUB

Toiyabe Chapter – Nevada and Eastern California

Box 406
Lone Pine, CA 93545



Dec. 20, 1983

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

88.1 The Eastern Sierra Nevada Committee of the Sierra Club supports the proposal of Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo and Sacatar as wilderness. These areas represent just a fraction of the original areas studied. With no known grazing in Cerro Gordo and Southern Inyo ,and mining nearly nonexistant, wilderness status has no real conflict with anything else. The compromise on acreage has already been made. Our county needs desert wilderness. Please make the correct decision.

Sincerely,

Michael Prather

Michael Prather- Secretary- Eastern Sierra Nevada Committee

LAS VEGAS GROUP
P.O. Box 19777
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth . . .

GREAT BASIN GROUP
P.O. Box 8096
University Station
Reno, Nevada 89507

Response 88.1

Your comments have been considered in the Final EIS analysis, and the attached petition (158 names) supporting the DEIS Proposed Action as a minimum has been included in the public comment file. Since the release of the DEIS, the Proposed Action has been modified. Please see pages 1-39 and 1-41 for discussion of the selection of the Proposed Actions for the Cerro Gordo WSA and the Southern Inyo WSA.

69

SCTR

SOUTH COUNTY TRAIL-RIDERS
4X4 CLUB
P.O. Box 373
Fremont, CA 94536

December 12, 1983

Bureau of Land Management
Robert D. Rheiner, Jr. - District Manager
800 Truxton Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

We have reviewed the Draft EIS for the Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville areas. We strongly disagree with Alternative II - All Wilderness, citing the conflicts of mineral and energy resources, as well as the management problems. We also strongly disagree with Alternative III - Partial Wilderness, on the same grounds as our objection to Alternative II. We are also worried about the possible economic impact to the local economy if Alternative II or III were adopted, coupled with the amounts of Wilderness proposed in the CDCA and nearby National Forests.

We feel that the proper management for these areas lies somewhere between Alternative I - Proposed Action and Alternative IV - No Action.

69.1 We have no objection to the Proposed Action for Sacatar Meadows (CA-010-027) and therefore support Wilderness designation for the 11,447 acres, with the understanding that this area does not possess wilderness character on its own, without the adjacent CDCA study area.

69.2 We do, however, have a great deal of trouble with the concept of Wilderness designation for Cerro Gordo (CA-010-055). This area is bounded by the four-wheel drive roads to Swansea and New York Butte and our membership has a great concern for the long-range implications of these roads being "corridors" within what could be an immense wilderness area, when you consider Southern Inyo plus the CDCA areas. We also feel that the Saline Valley salt tram, a national landmark, should not be "locked away" from people by inclusion in a formal wilderness area, but, rather, should be managed as a national treasure, to be enjoyed by ALL of the public. We also cite mineral and energy conflicts too great to be ignored by inclusion in a Wilderness proposal to prompt us to recommend a NO WILDERNESS action for Cerro Gordo.

69.3 As for the Southern Inyo parcel (CA-010-056) we have the same concern for the Swansea and New York Butte roads, as well as any developable mineral claims. The EIS indicates an excellent opportunity for solitude and rugged wilderness characteristics in this section. Because of this opportunity, we recommend that the northern section of this area be proposed for Wilderness designation and the southern and eastern sections near the Swansea and New York Butte roads be not included in the Wilderness designation.

69.3 cont. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this EIS.

Sincerely,

Carl S Jorgensen

Carl S. Jorgensen - Vice President
South County Trail-Riders
Four Wheel Drive Club

cc:
California Assn. 4WD Clubs, Inc.

Response 69.1

The Chapter 2 Proposed Action recommendation rationale reflects your observations.

Response 69.2

The Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA has been modified for reasons identified in Chapter 2.

Response 69.3

The Cerro Gordo to New York Butte Road and the Swansea Road would be unaffected by wilderness designation. Mineral development potential is considered low, at best, in the Southern Inyo suitable area. Please see the Chapter 2 Proposed Action recommendation rationale for further information.

John M. Angerer
ATTORNEY AT LAW
P.O. BOX 175
CITRUS HEIGHTS, CALIFORNIA 95611-0175
(916) 969-6222 OR 725-2124

32

November 30, 1983

Mr. Robert Rheiner
District Manager

BLM
800 Truxtun Avenue - Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Re: Benton - Owens Valley
Bodie - Coleville
Study Areas

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

32.1 With great interest I have read and studied the four (4) proposed options which are presently being considered in the above-captioned study areas.

I am gravely concerned that our future generations have the opportunity to experience and enjoy, as I have, these beautiful national treasures. In fact, I believe it is our moral and national duty to preserve as much land as is feasible in it's natural state. These areas have little, if any, mineral deposits or other commercial value. Their value lies in their natural beauty which, once lost is lost forever.

I therefore strongly urge the adoption of option II (All Wilderness) or at the very least option III (Partial Wilderness). It is my considered opinion that option I is merely a token gesture or a bone to throw to concerned citizens such as myself. Certainly every interest group which is voicing it's concerns for the future of these areas is convincing in argument.

Let us hope, however, that our future heirs will not scorn us for depriving them of the opportunity to experience our good earth in its natural state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

JOHN M. ANGERER
JMA/cob

Response 32.1

See Response 19.1 for determination of suitability. As Chapter 3 shows, mineral values are varied throughout the EIS area.

AtlanticRichfieldCompany
555 Seventeenth Street
Denver, Colorado 80202
Telephone 303 293 7577

J. R. Mitchell
Manager
Public Lands Coordination
Government Relations

76

December 14, 1983

Mr. Gerald McGee
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District Office
800 Truxtun Avenue
Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Re: Energy and Mineral Ratings
Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville

Dear Mr. McGee:

Atlantic Richfield Company appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Wilderness Recommendation/Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville Study Areas in California.

76.1 Attached are energy and mineral evaluation forms for the WSA's currently under study by the Bakersfield District of the Bureau of Land Management. We would like to point out that these evaluations reflect current knowledge and technology and must be subject to modification should new information become available. This is especially true due to the nature of exploration activities and the possibilities that new information or technology could shed new light on the areas' potential.

You will note that we used the BLM's energy and mineral evaluation form that appeared in a Federal Register notice on July 27, 1983. We believe that BLM should utilize the information reflected on the energy and mineral rating forms when making a wilderness or nonwilderness recommendation for the subject WSA's. Obviously, we believe that those areas with moderate or high potential for energy or mineral resources should not be recommended for wilderness.

76.2 Based on this attached evalution, we

1) Disagree with the proposed suitability for wilderness of the 14,222 acres in Cerro Gordo (CA-010-055) and with the assessment that

76.2 cont.

there is "No potential for metallic minerals in most of the area". There are several base metal silver mines just outside the WSA. There is potential for additional high grade small tonnage deposit elsewhere in the proposed wilderness.

76.3

2) Support the BLM's designation of unsuitable for wilderness for the following areas based on their energy and mineral potential.

Chidago Canyon	CA-010-079
Mormon Meadows	CA-010-094
Mt. Biedeman	CA-010-095
Bodie	CA-010-100
Masonic Mountain	CA-010-102

Also enclosed is a copy of "Consideration of Energy and Mineral Resources in the BLM and Forest Service Planning Process" which discusses a review process which compares access constraints to geologic potential in matrix form. We suggest you use this matrix format to accurately assess the effects of your decisions on the possible development of energy and mineral resources. The matrix system was designed to utilize the information provided by the evaluation. However, the evaluation system may be used independently from the matrix system.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide the BLM with these rating forms. We believe that such a system is the best way to provide land management agencies with relevant energy and mineral potential data. In addition, this system provides the BLM with industry contacts should additional information be needed.

Sincerely,

J. R. Mitchell

JRM:LJW:drm
Attachments

Response 76.1

The rating forms you submitted were utilized along with our GRM data in making final recommendations.

Response 76.2

The Proposed Action has been modified with respect to the Cerro Gordo WSA. Please see page 1-39 for discussion concerning selection of the Proposed Action.

Response 76.3

Your comments have been considered in the Final EIS analysis. The attachments to your letter, although greatly appreciated, have not been included in this document to help reduce length.

26

2449 Aramon Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
November 23, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr., District Manager
Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxton Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Sir:

It would seem that in order to make proper and valued decisions, all of the nineteen areas proposed for wilderness should be studied in great detail.

Remember that the decisions made now will be forever and, for that reason, we strongly urge you to follow Alternative 2.

Yours very truly,

Tom and Virginia Angenent

va

89

San Francisco State University
1600 HOLLOWAY AVENUE • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94132

Memorandum

To: ROBERT RHEINER, JR
BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT
B.L.M.

Date: DEC 17, 1983

From: CRANDALL BAY (407 ATLANTIC AVE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062)

Subject:

DEAR MR. RHEINER

I AM WRITING TO REGARDING WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS IN INYO, MONO AND ALPINE COUNTIES MENTIONED IN THE RECENT B.L.M. DRAFT E.I.S. HAVING SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME EVALUATING THE REGION'S RARE FLORA, WILDLIFE, AND UNIQUE FEATURES I URGE YOU TO ADOPT ALTERNATIVE 2 FOR THE 19 WSA'S. I URGE THIS IN THE BEST LONG TERM SCIENTIFIC, RECREATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS FOR THIS MOST IMPORTANT REGION.

SINCERELY,
CRANDALL BAY

38

California Institute of the Arts
Valencia California 91355
805 255 1050

November 29, 1983

Robert Rheiner, Jr., Disatrict Manager
BLM
800 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

Please support the all-wilderness alternative (#2) for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study areas. I have camped in these areas and hope that they can earn wilderness classification.

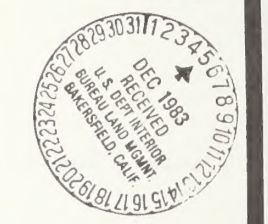
Yours most truly,

Dr. Robert L. Benedeti

5-40

35

45 Hillpark Avenue
Great Neck, NY 11021
Nov. 30, 1983



Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
BLM
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, Calif. 93301

Dar Mr. Rheiner:

My friends and I are very much concerned about our public lands, and our wildlife, and it is for this reason that we are writing this letter to you, I say "we", for my friends asked me to write this letter for them as well as for myself, therefore, please do not consider this as one letter, but as many, and I will give you their names and addresses at the end of this letter.

We all recommend Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative, for only by studying all nineteen areas in detail can your bureau make proper decisions on the wilderness values of these wild areas.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours

Mrs. Harry Bieber AND

General & Mrs. B. VanderClute	Valley Stream, NY
Doctor Nathan Brody	Floral Park, NY
Mr. & Mrs. D. Novin	" "
Mr. & mrs. L. Bukzin	Forest Hills, NY
Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Jones	Hendersonville, N. C.
Mr. & Mrs. D. Williamson	Export, Pa.
Mr. & Mrs. L. Asen	Great Neck, NY
Mr. & Mrs. M. Bressack	" "
Mr. & Mrs. Z. Talent	" "
Mr. & Mrs. G. Robertts	" "
Mr. & Mrs. S. Madigan	Glen Head, NY
Mr. & Mrs. g. Linsky	" "
Mr. & Mrs. T. Douso	" "
Mr. & Mrs. K. Nesky	Glenwood Landing, NY
Mr. & Mrs. J. O'Connell	Mineola, NY
Mr. & Mrs. S. Nevins	Baldwin, NY
Mr. & Mrs. P. Yanello	Brooklyn, NY
Mr. & Mrs. H. Bukzin	Great Neck, NY
Mr. & Mrs. A. Freedman	W. Hempstead, NY
Mr. & Mrs. M. Kass	Flushing, NY
Mr. & Mrs. L. FArber	Woodbury, NY
Mr. & Mrs. A. McEvoy	E. Northport, NY
Mr. & Mrs. R. Ragazzi	Centerport, NY
Mr. & Mrs. C. Mallow	Orlando, Fla.
Mr. & Mrs. J. Levin	Syosset, NY
Mr. & Mrs. R. Ettinger	Bellmore, NY
Mr. & Mrs. E. Novin	Areverne, NY
Mr. & Mrs. B. Melnick	Glen Cove, NY
Mr. & Mrs M. Rassin	Flushing, NY
Mr. & Mrs. S. Dukes	Queens Village, NY

Response 35.1 See Response 2.1

Mrs. Dr. Elisabeth Bingham
4735 Highland Drive Bishop, Calif. 93514

Oct. 30 1983

Mr. Rheyner
District Manager BLM
800 Truxton Rm 302
Bakersfield, Calif. 93301

Dear Mr. Rheyner,

In the Sierra Daily News of Oct. 28. I read the following headlines: "Locals Protest Cerro Gordo Wilderness Plans from B.L.M."

We want you to know that there are a lot of local people who are definitely in favor of the wilderness plans and our only regret is that not more land can be set aside for wilderness. It is very unfortunate that more and more roads penetrate the few remaining "retreats" where the country still looks the way it did a hundred years ago. Not only local people but also people from the big cities who travel hundreds of miles find relaxation in these remote areas. My husband and I travelled almost every weekend, before we moved to Bishop, from the L.A. area to the "wilderness" of the Sierra Nevada, Inyo and White Mountains. We were impressed with the beauty of the high desert regions. The views from Keynot and Inyo Mountain are magnificent.

Mr Harold Carrasco applied for a B.L.M. permit to run cattle at Cerro Gordo proposed Wilderness. He pledged to keep the wells open so wildlife could continue to use the springs as well. He would not have to do this if his cattle did not trample the springs in the first place. We have seen some awful big messes around springs that were used by cattle and burros.

Wildlife always suffers when it has to compete with domestic animals. Diseases will spread and the wildlife will stay away from these watering spots.

Mrs Lopez remarks: "the salt tram should not be hidden away from public view." This is not a valid observation since the tramway and the most interesting angle station can be seen from the Saline Valley floor. And a short hike will bring one to the station.

Mr. Carrasco remarked that to close the Cerro Gordo area off to vehicles would discriminate against hunters, the very young and the very old. As an older person I do not feel discriminated against at all. Somewhere the roads must stop because otherwise there will be nothing worthwhile visiting any more. As it is we have to travel longer distances in the car every year to come to a place where we are away from the turmoil of the city.

The hunters will only benefit from roadless areas. With so many of them it is almost impossible to be successful on an existing road. And a wilderness does not exclude the hunter on foot or on horseback.

As far as the very young are concerned: we have seen some very sick looking youngsters taken by their parents on a dune buggie ride. On the other hand we have seen some very healthy looking children travelling with their parents on foot or carried in a baby carrier on the back of mom or dad.

And would it not be nice if there will be some country left for them to explore when they grow up, where trees have grown for thousands of years, where artifacts can be found, left there by people they may like to learn about, where the only sounds are the wind in the pines and the song of a bird.

Respectfully
Elisabeth Bingham

Elisabeth Bingham

Response 6.1

Your comments have been noted and utilized in this Final EIS.

ADELINE M. PAMPEL
FRANK D. BOYER
% P.O. Box 611
LONE PINE, CA. 93545

16 DECEMBER 1983

86

ROBERT D. RHEINER, JR.,
DISTRICT MANAGER
800 TRUXTON AVE,
ROOM 302,
BAKERSFIELD, CA. 93301

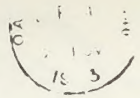
SIR;

THIS LETTER IS TO EXPRESS OUR OBJECTIONS TO THE "BENTON-OWENS VALLEY PLANNING UNIT AND CALIFORNIA DESERT PLAN from CERRO GORDO TO NEW YORK BUTTE". IT SEEMS THAT ENVIRONMENTALIST FAIL TO GRASP THE FACT THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE LIKE MY MOTHER, A 75 YEAR OLD SENIOR CITIZEN, AND THE HANDI-CAPPED, I MYSELF AM A EMPHYSEMIA VICTIM, WHO LOVE AND APPRECIATE THESE AREAS IN QUESTION AND VISIT THEM WHEN POSSIBLE. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THESE VISITS CAN ONLY BE DONE BY AUTO AND/OR 4 WHEEL DRIVE; FOR PEOPLE LIKE OURSELVES, OUR ENJOYMENT IS LIMITED BY THE EXISTING ROADS AND OUR OWN LIMITATIONS. THOSE IN BETTER PHYSICAL CONDITION HAVE NO SUCH RESTRICTIONS. TO MAKE THESE AREAS CLASSIFIED AS "WILD-ERNESS AREAS" DEPRIVES US, AND THOUSANDS LIKE US, OF THIS PRIVILEGE. THE PRESENT UTILIZATION OF THESE AREAS AS CATTLE FEEDING AREAS, EXTRACTION OF ITS MINERAL DEPOSITS BENEFITS NOT ONLY THOSE INVOLVED IN THESE VENTURES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES BUT THE WILDLIFE ITSELF. WE DO BELIEVE THAT FIRM RULES AND REGULATIONS SHOULD BE APPLIED AND ENFORCED IN GOVERNING THESE PRIVILEGES, AND THOSE WHO ABUSE THIS PRIVILEGE SHOULD BE FIRMLY DEALT WITH.

SINCERELY;

Frank D. Boyer

Adeline M. Pampel



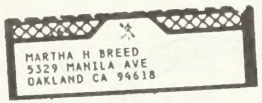
Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Ave, room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Nov 23, 1983

Dear Sir;

22.1 I am writing regarding the proposed designations of WSAs.
I recommend that Alternative 2 the all-wilderness alternative be adopted. Wilderness protection is necessary for raptor nesting sites, winter habitat for the Goodale mule deer herd, archeological sites and rare plant habitat protection.

Sincerely,
Martha Breed



Response 22.1

See Response 20.1

321 So. Chester Avenue
Bakersfield, California 93304

December 20, 1983

Bob Rheiner, Distr. Mngr.
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Ave. Rm 302
Bakersfield, Ca. 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

82.1 Last week Mr. Magree showed us a map of the proposed wilderness area NE of Lone Pine. In the region of section 13, 23, 24, 25 and 26 T14S Range 36E are valuable minerals such as lead, copper, silver, gold and the platinum group metals. Please see enclosed assay reports. Please note that these sections are immediately adjacent to the Monte Carlo Silver Mines in the South quarter of section 14.

Also in Sections 23, 24 and 26 there have been existing roads (see map) that we have been using to get to our claims. These roads have been in existence and have been in continuous use for many, many years. These roads have been used and are being used by others besides ourselves, because we have seen others in the area and have seen their car tracts on numerous occasions.

It is our understanding that wilderness areas are supposed to be areas where no access roads exist. For this reason and because of the high mineralized nature of this area, that we feel that the boundary of the wilderness area should be moved further East. It would be greatly appreciated if sections 23 & 26 and the SW¼ of section 13 & the W 3/4 of sections 24 & 25 as well as section 14 T14S R36E would be excluded from the proposed wilderness area.

If you have any questions please call us at 366-3547 or 831-5445. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

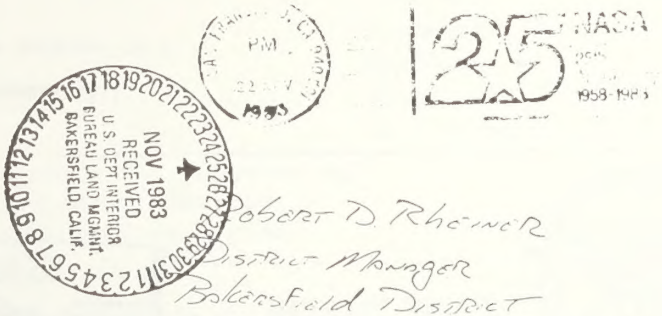
Wesley F. Buller

James A. Buller

Response 82.1

During the wilderness inventory (completed in 1979), these access routes were not considered to be roads as defined in the BLM Wilderness Inventory Handbook (September 1978). However, should the area be designated as wilderness, and your claims considered valid, you would be allowed reasonable access to develop your claims. See also Response 60.1 with respect to mineral values.

16



Robert D. Rheiner
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton Ave Rm. 302
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

11-22

(16)

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

I spent alot of time ~~in the areas~~ east of the Sierra - particularly the Owens Valley and Mono Basin areas - I would like to see the WSAs in these areas (in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties) designated as wilderness - they are worth it! Please support Alternative 2 outlined in the most recent EIS on these lands.

Thank you,
Tom Camara
1260 Sandalwood Rd. Los Altos CA 94022

58

ALAN CARLTON
ATTORNEY AT LAW
2005 PLEASANT VALLEY
SUITE 311
OAKLAND, CA. 94611

Robert D. Rheiner Jr.
BLM District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner

I am writing to you with regard to Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville WSA. I support Alternative 2, which would designate all WSAs as wilderness. It appears to me that wilderness designation will allow proper protection for these vulnerable areas. The protection of the land and its plants and wildlife is more important than ephemeral energy and mineral values. The amount of relatively pristine areas is rapidly diminishing. Such areas can never be replaced. The areas at issue are especially important because of their proximity to other wilderness areas in the Sierras and to Mono Lake.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Carlton

December 2, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxton Ave. Rm. 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

Living as I do here in the Mono Basin and having recently backpacked through some of the areas under evaluation for wilderness designation here, I feel I have a special obligation to add my voice to the testimony in favor of such designation.

37.1 In October of this year I enjoyed a 9-day backpacking trip around the perimeter of the Mono Lake hydrographic basin. I had expected the spectacular Sierran crest portion of this loop to be the most rewarding, but in fact found the solitude and unobstructed vistas along Cowtrack Mountain and the Bodie Hills to be the most uplifting of my spirit. The views from these areas across the cobalt blue expanse of Mono Lake to the high Sierra are truly outstanding. It is my fervent hope that the natural integrity and appearance of these lands will be preserved for others who will come in future years to enjoy on foot and in primitive fashion the unique scenery tht I have been fortunate enough to experience this way.

The value of these lands to the human spirit far outweighs whatever monetary gain that could be extracted from them through their exploitation for geothermal, mineral or other purposes. I strongly urge adoption of the All Wilderness Alternative II with regard to the Mormon Meadows, Mt. Biedeman, Excelsior, Granite Mountains, and Walford Springs areas.

Sincerely,

Steve Catton

STEVE CATTON

Response 37.1

See Responses 20.1 and 2.1.

2320 Goldberry Lane
Davis, CA 95616
December 18, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr., District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue, Rm. 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for nineteen Wilderness Study areas (WSAs) in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties.

85.1 I strongly support Alternative 2 to designate all nineteen deserving areas as wilderness. I was appalled to find the BLM recommending only portions of just three WSAs as suitable for wilderness. Several WSAs, including Sacatar Meadows, Southern Inyo, Independence Creek, Symmes Creek, and Slinkard, are adjacent to other roadless areas either recommended by BLM as suitable or under study by the Forest Service. Four areas in the Benton Range, Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tablelands, and Casa Diablo, contain abundant cultural resources including petroglyphs and camps with rock rings plus nesting sites for eagles and other raptors. Five areas in the Bodie Hills, Morman Meadows, Mt. Biedeman, Bodie Mountain, Bodie, and Masonic Mountain, contain pronghorn antelope, important archaeological sites, and five rare plants. Excelsior, Granite Mountain, and Walford Springs, WSAs east of Mono Lake, contain raptor nesting areas, one rare plant and potential habitat for another, pronghorn antelope, and wild horses.

I have visited the Excelsior WSA several times and have been impressed with the area's remoteness and feeling of isolation. The immense quietude of the place created a feeling of peace. Excelsior and all of the WSAs have great wilderness characteristics; these nineteen WSAs are the best areas chosen after rigorous screening in the inventory stage. According to the Wilderness Act, these areas are suitable for wilderness designation; unfortunately the BLM has chosen not to recognize this fact. I urge you to reconsider your proposal and chose Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative in the final EIS. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Wendy L. Cohen

Wendy L. Cohen

Response 85.1

See Response 20.1.

MICHAEL COLAVITO
21 MAPLE AVE.
CHAPPAQUA, N.Y. 10514

DEC. 5, 1983

DISTRICT MGR.
BUREAU OF LAND MGM'T.
800 TRUXTON AVE. RM 302
BAKERSFIELD, CA.

RE: COMMENTS ON THE WILDERNESS DEIS FOR BENTON OWENS VALLEY

DEAR MR. RHEINER,

WOULD YOU PLEASE THANK JERRY MAGEE FOR SENDING ME THE DEIS AND FOR ANSWERING MY QUESTION IN MY LETTER OF 10/14/83?

I WOULD ONLY LIKE TO ADD HERE A FEW MIKE REASONS FOR MY OPINION THAT GRANITE MTNS. WSA # CA-010-090 SHOULD BE RECOMMENDED AS SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION AND ADDED TO THE ACREAGE IN THE BLM'S "PROPOSED ACTION":

GRANITE MTN'S WSA IS OF A SIZE LARGE ENOUGH TO BE ATTRACTIVE TO BACK COUNTRY USERS AND OFFERS DIVERSITY OF LAND FORMS. IT SHOULD THEREFORE PROVE TO BE A POPULAR AND USEFUL UNIT IF THE NAT'L. WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM. WILDERNESS DESIGNATION WOULD ALSO PROTECT THE OLD RAILROAD AND WATERSHED PLUS HABITAT FOR PRONGHORN AND RAPTORS.

IN ADDITION, I FEEL THAT ACCORDING TO THE PLANNING CRITERIA MATRIX ON PAGE 3-6 OF THE DEIS A MAJOR REASON CALLING FOR WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION IS THE FACT THAT THE UNITS' I.S.P. - GREAT BASIN SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM IS INADEQUATELY REPRESENTED IN THE N.W.P.S.

52.1

FOR THESE REASONS I FEEL THE "PROPOSED ACTION" SHOULD BE ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE GRANITE MTNS. WSA # CA-010-090. THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT.

SINCERELY,

Michael Colavito

Response 52.1

The final analysis for this area concluded that the overall lack of high quality wilderness values as well as some resource conflicts and manageability considerations disqualified this area from being recommended as suitable for wilderness designation (see page 1-48 for a discussion of the selection of the Proposed Action for the Granite Mountains WSA). In addition, existing legislation and Bureau policies provide protection for supplemental resource values, such as cultural values, wildlife, etc. Finally, the Intermountain Sagebrush Province - Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem is represented by two wilderness areas (7,020 areas) and six administratively endorsed units (638,010 acres).

54

Betsey Collins
8730 Casanova
Atascadero, California 93422

Robt. Rheinorth.
BLM
800 Truxtun
Bakersfield, Ca.

Dear Sir.

I urge you to adopt Alternative 2. the all wilderness Alternative. We must make A complete & exhaustive Study of all these wired areas.

Sincerely
Betsey Collins

5-47

45

140 PAVILION STREET
P. O. BOX 506
INDEPENDENCE, CA 93526
(619) XXX878-2389

Mary DeDecker
Botanist

Re: Wilderness, Inyo Mts.
Cerro Gordo & Southern
Inyo

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr., District Manager
Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

This is to follow up on my appearance at the hearing in Bishop on BLM wilderness proposals.

As I said, I strongly favor wilderness classification for the Southern Inyo and Cerro Gordo areas. I know the Inyo Mountains rather intimately and feel better qualified than most to weigh the values there. Both areas are fine examples of desert mountain country. There is enough variation in formations and resulting habitats to make them, together, a rich wilderness unit. Although the major focus should be to preserve these areas as natural habitats, there are unusual plants to be considered, too. There are Cycladenia humilis var. venusta, Perityle inyoensis, and several special buckwheats. The Perityle is on the CNPS rare list. I would hope that the portion east of the Inyo crest, that in the California Desert District will be made wilderness also. Between the two sides, some high altitude species unusual for desert ranges occur.

I am convinced, from observing recent pressures, that we must create wilderness areas in order to preserve any choice examples of our public lands. I know that we cannot depend on local government to appreciate them enough to offer protection.

I hope the BLM staff makes allowances for statements made by pressure groups who insist that the land should be used. Most of them simply do not know what they are talking about, and they assume that any use of the land is denied under any protective management. I get awfully tired of the old cliches, "locking up the country" and "elderly people want to enjoy the flowers, too". What it really means is that those who have enjoyed special privileges on public land do not want any interference with their "rights".

Barbara Wilson Coman Smith has been a leader in the emotional movement opposing wilderness. Although she makes an issue over "Closing the roads", she and her second husband, Fred Coman, kept a locked gate on the Cerro Gordo end of the road to New York Butte. When we approached it from the north end and stopped to investigate

the gate, several shots rang out. It was a frightening experience for the friends with us. (My husband then walked down to talk to Barbara and Fred and obtained a key.) They considered it their privilege to run the place as they pleased. Her first husband, Wally Wilson, is credited with wiping out the last of the bighorn in the southern Inyos. I tell you these things, not to be unkind to Barbara and her friends, but to point out the inconsistencies in their arguments. I could take each one apart in much the same way.

As for cattlemen taking care of the springs, they have it all backwards. Only the springs that cattle were unable to reach were in an acceptable condition. I still remember my disgust upon reaching the spring south of peak 9437, expecting to find a lush riparian habitat. Anything green had been trampled out by cattle which were grazing in the area. It certainly was not my idea of a "cared for" spring. I understand there has been grazing this year, too, in defiance of the closure. More of the "special privilege" attitude! I cannot believe that there is enough grazing value there to make a valid argument against wilderness and its long-range benefits. The damage done by cattle is a good argument in favor of wilderness. As one example, a fine Amelanchier thicket along the crest had been browsed down to the wood by cattle.

45.1

Much was made of the petition opposing wilderness. I can assure you that, although the heading appeared innocent enough, it was circulated with some pretty wierd claims. Some of my friends signed it just to be agreeable. The sudden surge of demands in support of mining is interesting. It began with the appointment of Johnny Johnson to the California Desert Advisory Committee. He is much impressed withe power of his position. He eagerly believes anything the mining people tell him, because that is what he wants to hear. The "Feds" are locking up the land and thus preventing great fortunes from being taken from any mining claim. Of course that is the story of mining history. Every claim was a road to wealth; the public loved the tall tales, and there were plenty of suckers eager to invest. Johnny will believe the tall tales every time, rather than be dismayed with facts. I find legitimate mining operations far easier to deal with. They respect good land management.

This is to plead with you to sort out the wheat from the chaff and base your decision on sound planning. It becomes more and more evident that we do need wilderness areas. I believe that the majority of people do want it, even though they are less vocal than those who demand their special rights. The Southern Inyo and Cerro Gordo areas are excellent candidates.

I have not addressed the Sacatar proposal, simply because I am not so familiar with it. People whose judgment I respect do favor it, however. For that reason I would support wilderness designation there too.

Yours sincerely,

Mary DeDecker

Mary DeDecker

5-48

Response 45.1

The springs that were identified appear to be Mexican Spring and Cerro Gordo Spring. Both of these springs are located in an adjoining WSA which is administered by the California Desert District. Thus, they are outside the scope of this study. Moreover, cattle grazing is not authorized in either of the WSAs; if cattle grazing is occurring, it would be considered illegal and in trespass. While the impacts on riparian habitat and springs as a result of wilderness designation or nondesignation are not addressed as an issue in the EIS, areas with known degradation have been identified and in Chapter 2 management actions for rehabilitation and/or protection are identified. Additionally, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the objective of the ongoing Bodie Hills Coordinated Resource Management Plan is to identify and correct problem areas associated with riparian habitat.

23

11-25-83

DEAR MR. RHEINER,
DISTRICT MANAGER BLM

RE: BENTON-OWENS VALLEY/BODIE-COLEVILLE STUDY AREAS

AFTER REVIEWING SOME OF THE PROPOSALS TO DESIGNATE A FEW OF THESE AREAS AS WILDNERESS, I AM DISMAYED. THE PERCENTAGE OF LAND IS SO MINOR, WHY ARE YOU CONSIDERING IT AT ALL?

HAVE YOU MADE A COMPLETE AND REALLY HONEST SURVEY OF ALL, I MEAN A-L-L, THIS AREA?

JUST A VISUAL, DISTANT VIEW OF SOME OF THIS AREA SIMPLY DEMANDS A THOROUGH STUDY OF ALL THE DETAILS — AND VALUES OF A LAND THAT CRIES FOR PROTECTION.

WHAT DOES IT HURT TO PROCLAIM IT SUITABLE FOR KEEPING FOR THE FUTURE? WHO KNOWS WHAT ABOUNDS, LET ALONE THE NATURAL BEAUTY, THE WILDLIFE, THE HISTORIC AND ATHROPOLOGICAL VALUES, THE HABITAT OF PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE WE KNOW AND DON'T KNOW?

LETS KEEP WHAT WE CAN, TODAY. LETS WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW. AND IF IT IS LEFT, AS IS, MAYBE WE WILL BE REMEMBERED AS THE PROTECTORS OF OUR NATURAL AND NATIVE HERITAGE, NOT THE SPOILERS AND GIVER-AWAYS.

Harold L. Dittmer

MR H L DITTMER
3911 FERNWOOD AVE
LOS ANGELES CA 90027
3R17

5-49

33

November 29, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner Jr.,
District Manager, Bakersfield
Bureau of Land Management
Dear Mr. Rheiner,

Although the Bureau of Land Management has put out a draft environmental impact statement for Nineteen (19) Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties, the bureau is recommending only certain parts of three of the areas as wilderness.

33.1

To me, all nineteen areas are worthy of wilderness designation, since they house wild animals such as mule deer, bighorn sheep, prairie falcons, rare plants, subalpine forest, cultural (historical) resources, archeological sites, etc. I do not believe that they should be dismissed as not suitable for wilderness designation right now.

Instead, I believe that Alternative #2

(2)

33.1 cont. should be followed (the all-wilderness designation) and the various areas in the timation parts be thoroughly studied, one by one, for proper wilderness values.

Sincerely yours,
Frances Boller
6000 Coldwater Canyon #1
North Hollywood, Calif. 91606

Response 33.1

See Response 20.1

77

Robert Dominick
P.O. Box 664
Springville, CA
93265

Robert D Rhriner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Ave. Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

12/15/83

Dear Mr. Rhriner,

77.1 I recently learned of the BLM proposal to accept as wilderness only 3 of the 19 W.S.A.'s in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties.

Being familiar with much of the area in question, I'd like to let you know that I consider these areas as prime wilderness potential and deserving of greater protection.

The recent Mohave Desert race is an example of the incredible abuse that a single small group can perpetrate on an unprotected area. Will we see motorcycle races in Inyo County desert someday? Let's stop the possibility by protecting all potential wilderness!

Yours,
Robt Dominick

Response 77.1

See Response 20.1.

71

December 14, 1983

Dear Sir:

71.1

Please designate as suitable for wilderness all nineteen Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties.

Important areas that should be included are the following:

Independence Creek and Symmes Creek, adjacent through Forest Service roadless lands to the John Muir wilderness and are tule elk winter habitat.

Crater Mountain, located South of Big Pine which is crucial winter habitat for the Goodale mule deer herd.

Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tablelands and Casa Diablo located in the Benton range north of Bishop. These areas abound with cultural resources and include camps with rock rings, lithic scatters and petroglyphs. Also nesting areas for raptors are found here.

Three areas East of Mono Lake are suitable for wilderness. These are Excelsior, Granite Mountain

71.1 cont.

and Walford Springs. They contain one rare plant, potential habitat for another, pronghorn antelope, wild horses and raptor nesting areas.

Mormon Meadows, Mt. Biedeman, Bodie Mountain, Bodie and Masonic Mountain in the Bodie Hills contain Pronghorn antelope, fire rare plants and important archeological sites.

The Slinkard W.S.A. adjacent to the Carson-Iceberg roadless area contains peregrine falcon nesting habitat and winter habitat for deer as well as a fawning area.

I recommend Alternative 2, and a detailed study by the B.L.M. of all nineteen areas.

Sincerely,

Ms. Eleanor Elander
1108 64th St.
Sacramento, Calif.,
95819

Response 71.1

See Response 20.1.

5 December, '83

To: Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.,
District Manager, Bakersfield District,
800 Troxton Ave., Room 302,
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

49.1 Concerning WSAs in the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville areas: I am glad to hear that Alternative III of your DEIS embodies recommendations that portions of the Granite and Bodie ranges be considered for wilderness designation. As someone who has hiked and backpacked through the Granite range, I believe that its value as a wilderness area exceeds the benefits to be reaped from development of its geothermal characters.

Thank you for your time.

Scincerely yours,

Erik B. Ferry
2632 Haza st.,
San Francisco, CA 94121

Response 49.1

See Response 4.1.

Dec 3, 1983

Robt. D Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager, Bakersfield
BLM

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

41.1 I am writing with reference to the draft EIS for 19 WSA's in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties. I am happy to see the portions of Sacatar Meadows, Cerro Gordo, and Southern Inyo WSA's recommended for Wilderness, but I feel recommending only 53,000 out of 290,000 acres for Wilderness is not enough. I recommend Alternative 2, the All-Wilderness alternative. Areas adjacent to current or proposed USFS wilderness, such as Independence Creek, Symmes Creek, and Slinkard are particularly important. Also those containing important wildlife habitat or rare plant species, such as Crater Mtn, the 4 in the Benton Range, (Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tablelands, and Casa Diablo), the 3 east of Mono Lake (Excelsior,

41.1 cont.

GRANITE MOUNTAIN, and EXCELSIOR SPRINGS), and the 5 in the BODIE HILLS (MORMAN Meadows, MT. BIEDEMAN, BODIE MTN, BODIE, & MASONIC MTN) should all be preserved.

I recommend a detailed study of all 19 areas, and an eventual adoption of Alternative 2, the All Wilderness alternative.

Thank you,

ED FOURT

ED FOURT
824 CORNELL
ALBANY, CA 94706

Response 41.1

See Response 20.1.

Rte. 2, Box 89
Lone Pine, Ca. 93545
December 19, 1983.

Robert Rheiner Jr., District Manager, BLM
800 Truxton Ave. Rm. 302
Bakersfield, Ca. 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

We strongly urge your support for the proposed wilderness designation areas of Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo, and Cactar.

As former southern California residents, we have enjoyed many vacations over the years in these beautiful, historical, unspoiled wilderness areas, which are becoming more endangered by the impact of mining and other development.

As California's population grows, so does its need for wilderness. We must protect what we have for future generations.

Thank you for your positive consideration of this proposal.

Very sincerely,

Martha J. Gilchrist
Allen J. Gilchrist

Mr. and Mrs. Allen J. Gilchrist

44

December 5, 1983

Mr Rheiner
BLM District Manager
800 Truxtun Avenue Room 302
Bakersfield, California 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

I have read of the various advantages of adding the three proposed BLM wilderness areas in Inyo County and am writing to substantiate my support.

I have been advised that the existing mining rights are preserved and that the area will be open for fishing, camping, etc. and that the major change will be the exclusion of off road vehicles and new roads. It was distressing for me to read the widely distributed copied report by Senator Richardson where his information on wilderness legislation was quite the contrary. He stated that these areas, in wilderness, would diminish load use of hunting, fishing, camping and recreation and would also seriously impact development of minerals.

I have great hope that this wilderness can be preserved.

Sincerely,
Charlene Grogan
2954 Indian Creek Drive
Bishop, Ca. 93514

44.1

Response 44.1

As your letter states, valid existing mineral rights and application of those rights would be allowed to continue in designated wilderness areas. Recreation activities that are compatible with wilderness, such as hunting, camping, and hiking would be allowed to the degree consistent with preservation of the area's wilderness values. Motorized vehicle use and road construction would not be allowed. Finally, new mining claims would not be permitted after the area is designated as wilderness.

34

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Ave, Rm 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

34

Dear Sir, Am writing concerning the following wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono & Alpine counties: Sacato Meadows, Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo, Co-dependence Creek, Symmes Creek, Water Mountain, Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tablelands, Casa Diablo, Excelsior, Granite Mountain, Walford Springs, Marman Meadows, Mt. Biedeman, Bodie Mountain, Bodie, Sherkand & Masonic Mountain. These areas are adjacent to Designated Wilderness areas or Forest Service Roadless areas. Only by studying all of these areas can the BLM make proper decisions on the wilderness values of these wild areas. They all contain plants, animals, and most importantly, habitat that needs wilderness designation status. I strongly urge you to chose Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative and protect all of these outstanding areas. Thank you.

Katie Jane Hendricken

34.1

Response 34.1

See Response 20.1

47

December 3, 1983

29900 Highway 20
Fort Bragg, California 95437

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, California 93301

Public Record

Draft EIS for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness Study Areas

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

I'd like, first of all, to express my disappointment that BLM proposed to designate as suitable for wilderness designation only portions of three Wilderness Study Areas in its draft environmental impact statement for nineteen WSA's in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties.

This is not good land use planning. Only by studying all nineteen areas in detail can the BLM make reasonable and proper decisions on the wilderness values of these wild areas.

I urge that BLM study all nineteen areas in detail. I additionally recommend the adoption of Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative. I believe that wilderness is a highly fragile and fast-vanishing resource that should be protected in every way possible, and that BLM has a duty to do so.

Thank you. Please keep me informed on the progress of wilderness study and designation for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville wilderness study areas.

Sincerely,

Ron Guenther

47.1

Response 47.1

See Responses 20.1 and 2.1.

31

November 27, 1983

Doug Hansen
3050 Coyote Creek Rd.
Wolf Creek, OR 97497

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakerfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

31.1 I am writing in regards to the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness Study Areas, located in Alpine, Inyo, and Mono counties. I urge the BLM to adopt Alternative 2 in the draft environmental impact statement for these areas, which would make all of them wilderness. They deserve such designation because of their outstanding wildlife and archeological values. Of the areas not recommended by BLM for wilderness, nine have important archeological sites, and 7 are important wildlife habitat. Three are adjacent to de-facto or designated roadless areas.

Sincerely yours,

Doug Hansen

Doug Hansen

Response 31.1

See Response 20.1.

74

Bob Hartman
1988 Noble Street
Lemon Grove, CA 92045

December 17, 1983

Robert Rheiner Jr.
District Manager BLM
800 Truxton Ave
Room 302
Bakerfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

74.1 I wish to add my personal support for BLM Wilderness Designation for Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyon and Sacatar Wilderness Areas. I am familiar with this areas from several backpacking trips and believe that each is more than qualified for wilderness designation.

By preserving these areas as wilderness the Bureau will be maintaining an important aspect of the economy of Inyo County by supporting recreation. Many of us from the San Diego area use these areas for backpacking trips and when we travel up to Inyo County we add to the local economy by patronizing local businesses.

It is also important to keep in mind that by designating these areas as wilderness they would remain open to all people. There is no reason that everyone cannot enjoy these special places without introducing motor vehicles into them. Frankly I have to state my opposition to BLM allowing motor vehicles of any sort into these areas.

Of course I recognize that patented mines and exisiting rights will still be honored. From my travels in these areas I have noted that the areas being considered have not been mined because of very limited mineral deposits and the areas with good potential for mining have not been included in the wilderness area proposals. In this same vein it should be recognixed that hunting is still permitted within the wilderness area proposal.

As with all potential wilderness areas I believe that it is essential that we keep in mind that outdoor recreation is becoming more popular and that in particular desert backpacking is increasingly recognized as an unique experience. With the population of the state continuing to grow it is extremely important that we establish wilderness areas that provide these opportunities and also allow for safeguarding of these valuable resources for the future.

I appreciate this opportunity to comment on wilderness designation for Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo and Sacatar. All of them are of extraordinary quality as wilderness and deserve such protection.

B.F. Hartman

Response 74.1

Your comments have been considered in the Final EIS analysis. However, the Proposed Action has been modified for Cerro Gordo WSA since the DEIS. See Chapter 2 for further information.

2 DEC. 1983

MR. RHEINER,

I AM WRITING TO YOU BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN WILDERNESS, IN PRESERVING CHOICES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. I RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE #2, FOR ALL WILDERNESS FOR THE NINETEEN W.S.A.'S IN INYO, MONO, AND ALPINE COUNTIES.

WHY SHOULDN'T INDEPENDENCE CREEK AND SYMMES CREEK BE PROTECTED? RIPARIAN ZONES IN GOOD CONDITION ARE HARD TO COME BY.

YOU MAY FEEL THAT DESIGNATING 53,089 ACRES OUT OF 290,216 IS ENOUGH, I AM SURE YOU CAN LIVE WITH MORE WILDERNESS. WILDERNESS IS OUR HERITAGE, OUR NATION WAS BORN AND DEFENDED IN THE WILDERNESS.

PLEASE RECONSIDER THE B.L.M. RECOMMENDATION AND HELP GIVE OUR CHILDREN AT LEAST THE SAME CHOICES THAT WE HAVE.

FOR A HEALTHY PLANET,

VINCE HAUGHEY,

17346 EXCELSIOR DITCH CAMP RD.

NEVADA CITY, CALIFORNIA 95959

40.1

5-57

Response 40.1

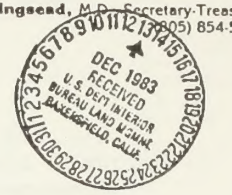
See Response 20.1.

[illegible]ed Mining Co.

2-20 Sandy Lane, Bakersfield, California 93306

Edwin Helgerud, President (805) 872-1165

Howard Hollingsead, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer (805) 854-5789



[illegible]er 12, 198[illegible]

[illegible] D. Rheiner, Jr.,
[illegible]ict Manager
[illegible]u of Land Management
[illegible]ruxton Avenue Suite 322
[illegible]sfield, California 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

In 1966 (A.D.), I began prospecting 12 miles northeast of Lone Pine, California. More specifically, in the Southern Inyo Mountain Range, Township (T) 14 south, Range (R) 36 east, Section 23; Lone Pine Quadrangel, 15 Minute Series.

During my first weeks of prospecting, I discovered some mallable metal nuggets. They were silver in color, with a hardness of four to four and a half. I spent the next 17 years trying to learn more about what I had found.

Thorough testing was conducted by myself, as well as by geologists and geology departments of various colleges. Oxygen gas was necessary to smelt the nuggets, but no single acid (hot or cold) would dissolve them. Suspecting that I had found noble group metals, I sent assays to South America, Canada, New York, California and New Mexico.

From these places, I received 86 positive assay reports for platinum group metals, among which were: Ledoux & Co., Teaneck, New Jersey; R.A. Hanson Co., Spokane, Washington; Hornkohl Laboratories Division, Bakersfield, California; B.C. Laboratories, Bakersfield, California; David M. Bauer, Chemist and Consultant, Los Angeles, California; Academy Corporation, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

However, even with these results, I was given little or no support by engineers and geologists. Therefore I proceeded on my own to mine and to take bulk samples of ore, and continued testing procedures. (As a result, I have since contracted heavy metal poisoning).

Initially I used Atomic Absorption Tests. But without a background corrector, geologists would not accept my assays. Since that time, I have obtained Atomic Absorption tests with a background corrector, therefore making my assays acceptable.

60.1

Helsed Mining Co.

2120 Sandy Lane, Bakersfield, California 93306

Edwin Hellerud, President
(805) 872-1765

Howard Hollingsead, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer
(805) 854-5789

60.1 cont

Along with these tests, I have also conducted wet chemical assays and the Inductively Coupled Argon Plasma test. These also demonstrated positive results on cobolt, nickle, gold, silver, copper, iron, ovuline, serpentine and platinum group metals.

Although most documents available state that there are insignificant quantities of platinum in the United States (von Bernewitz, M.W., Handbook for Prospectors and Operators of Small Mines, 1943, p. 242), there are other reports which contradict this. For example: in 1981 a report was published by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Mines (California Geology, May, 1981, p. 91-98) stating that "flotation concentrates containing up to 1000 oz/ton of platinum group metals were prepared from heavy mineral concentrates (black sands)." (Ibid. p. 91). Results showed that all six platinum group metals were present in most of the samples. This investigation was conducted in alluvial deposits in Northern and Central California.

A professional mining engineer has been working closely with me for the last few months in drawing up plans for mining this precious metal. On November 7, 1983, I notified Mr. Rick Teixeria (Bishop Division of Land Management, California) of my plans. The response was that it might not be possible for me to mine as intended, because my claims were staked after the 1976 Federal Land Policy Management Act (F.L.P.M.A.). I immediately withdrew my plan and will resubmit a revised plan which contains only my pre-F.L.P.M.A. claim (T-14 south, R-36 east, Section 23, S.E. quadrant).

Neither section 23 nor section 26 of T-14 south, R-36 east are completely in the wilderness area (see Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas Draft Environmental Impact Statement, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, California map 2-b, p. 2-21)

As you know, the U.S. imports most of its platinum supply at the present time. With my positive findings of platinum in California in a fairly easily accessible area (there is a road to the area which I have maintained since 1966), I am requesting that sections 24,25 and the remaining portions of sections 23 and 26 be withdrawn from the wilderness area, in order to be able to mine this much needed platinum.

I would appreciate a reply to my request and would like to be notified as to what the results will be.

Sincerely,

Edwin E. Hellerud, A.A.T, C.R.T

Bob Abbott and Cut.

Response 60.1

Although your test results show high mineral values, our most current mineral information, primarily from the GEM Reports (April 1983), shows only low metallic mineral potential in this area, which borders a high metallic mineral potential area to the north. In addition, the proposed suitable area boundary follows a contour level, providing better manageability than following less easily identifiable section lines. Upon approval of the proposed suitable recommendation by the Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines will conduct in-depth mineral surveys to more accurately determine mineral potential as well as related development potential. Should the area be designated as wilderness by Congress and your claims be considered valid, development of your claims could proceed under valid existing rights.
Response to Inyo County Planning Department (Letter No. 2)

68

Helsed Mining Co.

2120 Sandy Lane, Bakersfield, California 93306

Edwin Hellerud, President
(805) 872-1765

Howard Hollingsead, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer
(805) 854-5789

DECEMBER 14, 1983

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
800 TRUXTUN AVE., ROOM 302
BAKERSFIELD, CA. 93301

RE: HELSED MINING CO.

DEAR SIR:

68.1

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE CLEAR A FEW FACTS CONCERNING THE RECENTLY ORGANIZED HELSED MINING CO.

I HAVE KNOWN EDWIN HELLERUD SINCE 1958 AND FIRST BECAME ASSOCIATED WITH HIM IN 1973 AT WHICH TIME HE CONVINCED ME HE HAD FOUND A STRANGE INTRIGUING METAL IN THE AREA WHICH WOULD LATER BECOME "CYNTHIA #1", SOMETIME IN 1975. THE METAL HAS BEEN PROVEN BY MORE THAN EIGHTY RELIABLE ASSAYERS TO BE PLATINUM et.al. HUNDREDS OF LAB TESTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT IN HELLERUD'S LAB.ALL RESULTING WITH THE SAME FINDINGS-PLTINUM GROUP METALS.

IN 1975 MY WIFE AND I FIRST STOOD ON THE MAIN MARKER OF CYNTHIA #1 WHICH CONSISTS OF A BIG ROCK ABOUT 100 YARDS UP THE FIRST CANYON NORTH OF CLARK'S CANYON LOCATED ON THE SOUTH BANK OF THE CANYON MIDWAY BETWEEN THE NORTH-EAST TO SOUTH WEST-BORDER OF CYNTHIA #1.

IT WAS ALSO IN 1975 THAT AFTER HAVING CLEARED THE ROAD UP TO THE CLAIM OF MANY HEAVY ROCKS AND DEBBIS THAT I SENT MR. HELLERUD TO DR. VOGEL IN LOS ANGELES BECAUSE OF INJURY TO HIS BACK. HE WAS TREATED WITH STRONG PAIN MEDICATION AND PLACED IN TRACTION FOR SOME TIME.

WE ARE ASKING THAT ALL OF SECTIONS 23,24, AND 26 BE DELETED FROM THE WILDERNESS AREA BECAUSE OF THIER HIGH MINERAL CONTENT.

IN SPITE OF ALL THE OBSTICLES AND DELAYS WE ARE PRESENTLY ABOUT TO START A PILOT MINING OPERATION FOR PLATINUM et.al. WE HAVE BEEN ACQUIRING INFORMATION AND EQUIPMENT OVER THE YEARS WITH THE INTENT TO BEGIN OPERATIONS AS SOON AS WE HAVE THE GO-AHEAD.

SINCERELY,

H.W. Hollingsead M.D.

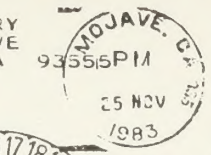
H.W. HOLLINGSEAD M.D.

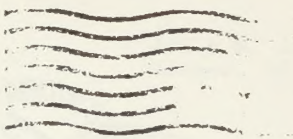
Response 68.1

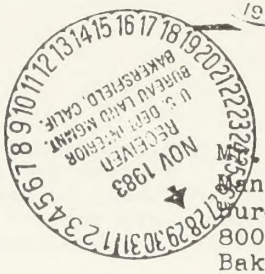
See Response 60.1.

19

RONALD A HENRY
329 PERDEN AVE
RIDGECREST CA 93555







Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
Manager, Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

November 25, 1983

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

19.1

Why so few acres recommended suitable for wilderness in the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area (Alternative I), when there are so many other acres which are equally suitable and which meet the criteria of wilderness? I would prefer Alternative III, which is a better balance between suitable and non-suitable areas; in addition it would then include more of the acres which are contiguous to current wilderness areas or proposed WSA's (both Forest Service and BLM). In order to maintain a manageable western boundary on the Sacater Meadows WSA, the 11,447 acres designated in Alternative I could be retained rather than the 15,050 acres recommended in Alternative III.

Sincerely yours,

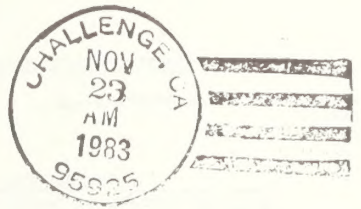
Ronald A. Henry

Response 19.1

See Chapter 1 pages 1-38 through 1-54 for a discussion of the Selection of the Proposed Action and Development of Alternatives for each WSA including Sacatar Meadows WSA.

20

Kathryn Hiestand
P.O. Box 112
Challenge, CA
95925



Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton Ave. Rm 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Nov. 22, 1983

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

I am writing concerning the draft environmental impact statement issued for 19 Wilderness Study areas in Inyo, Mono & Alpine counties, by the B.L.M. I see only 3 of the areas are recommended - Sacatar Meadows, Cerro Gordo & Southern Inyo. The rest surely have wilderness potential & vital wildlife habitat! Independence Creek & Symmes Creek are tule elk winter habitat. Crater Mt is crucial for the Goodale mule deer herd. I was especially disappointed to learn that the 4 areas (Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tablelands & Casa Diablo) located in the Benton Range were not included. I have been there myself enjoying the raptors and marveling at the cultural remains. These things in themselves demand wilderness protection! The exclusion of 3 areas east of Mono Lake and the areas in the Bodie Hills also disappointed me. Here is habitat for the dwindling pronghorn antelope! I urge you to propose ALTERNATIVE 2 - the all wilderness alternative as your final recommendation. Sincerely, Kathryn Hiestand

20.1

5-60

Response 20.1

Wilderness values are described for each WSA in Chapter 3 and the impacts on these values including special features such as raptor nesting areas and cultural resources are assessed in Chapter 4 based on the management actions identified in Chapter 2 for the Proposed Action and alternatives for each WSA. The reason for the selection of the Proposed Action for each WSA is described in Chapter 1 on pages 1-38 through 1-54.

57

December 12, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District BLM
800 Truxtun Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

I'm writing in regard to your recently released draft environmental impact statement for 19 Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono and Alpine counties. I am disappointed that you recommended such a small portion of the total acreage for Wilderness designation.

I am requesting that the BLM select Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative for all of the 19 areas under consideration.

Thank you for you attention.

Yours truly,
Andrew Honig

Andrew Honig
131 Pasatiempo Dr.
Bakersfield, CA 93305

12

November 22, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
Bakersfield District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
800 Trustun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, California 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

I am writing to express my support for Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative for the nineteen WSAs in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine ounties. I am very familiar with the areas under study here because of my interest in the Desert Trail. I have spent considerable time in these areas studying possible routing for the Desert Trail, so I know what is involved. This is the opportunity to give these areas the sort of protection they deserve, a protection which will best benefit the needs of the American public.

Sincerely,

Thomas Hunt

Thomas Hunt
950 Old Trace Road
Palo Alto, California 94306

5-61

51

475 A N. 3rd St.
Bishop, CA 93514

Mr. Robert Rheiner
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

The position of some of our elected officials in Inyo county against wilderness designation does not represent the views of all of the citizens of Inyo and Mono counties.

All of us who signed the enclosed petition support, as a minimum, wilderness status for the three proposed areas in the Benton-Owens Valley and Bodie-Coleville study areas.

Sincerely,

Joanne Kerbavaz

Joanne Kerbavaz

To Mr. Robert Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager BLM
800 Truxtun Ave. Rm. 302
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

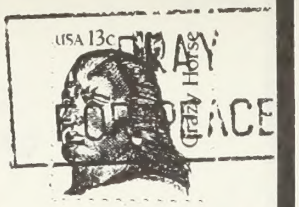
We the undersigned citizens of Inyo and Mono Counties support, as a minimum, the three proposed areas of wilderness in the Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville Study Areas. These areas are Sacatar Meadows (CA-010-027), Cerro Gordo (CA-010-055) and Southern Inyo (CA-010-056). Any less acreage would not represent the true wilderness values of the Eastern Sierra.

NAME	ADDRESS	COUNTY
Sally Gaines	Po Box 119 Lee Vining CA 93541	MONO
Janet Carle	PO Box 99 Lee Vining CA 93541	"
Mary [illegible]	Box 29 Lee Vining CA	"
David Gaines	PO Box 119 Lee Vining CA	"
Dean Cutter	Bx 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541	"
Joan Kabana	475 A N 3rd St, Bishop CA 93514	Inyo
E O Porter	437 E. South St., Bishop CA 93514	Inyo
Mignon Shumway	407 W. Pine St, Bishop, CA 93514	Inyo
Tom Blankinship	352 Wildrose Lane, CA 93514	Inyo

36

L.M. KOCHER
1106 GRAND AVE
SAN RAFAEL CA 94901

SAN RAFAEL, CA 946 PM 2 DEC 1983



DEC 1983 RECEIVED U.S. DEPT INTERIOR BUREAU LAND MGMNT. BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

ROBT. RHEINER, JR.
800 TROXTON AVE, RM 302
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

(36)

12/1/83

DEAR MR. RHEINER,

PLEASE ACCEPT MY COMMENTS FOR THE OFFICIAL RECORD RE THE DEIS ON BLMs REVIEW OF AREAS FOR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION.

OF 298,726 acres considered, PLEASE DESIGNATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF THAT LAND AS WILDERNESS. ALTERNATIVE I IS A TRAVESTY SINCE IT OMITS BODIE AND GRANITE MT. AREAS. ALTERNATIVE III IS PREFERABLE, AND EVEN IT IS NOT ENOUGH. WHEN WILL WE LEARN THAT WE MUST PRESERVE WILDERNESS AND OTHER LIFE NOT UNDER OUR CONTROL, IF WE OURSELVES ARE TO LIVE? WE NEED as much wilderness as possible. Preserve it now

Thank you, L.M. Kocher

5-63

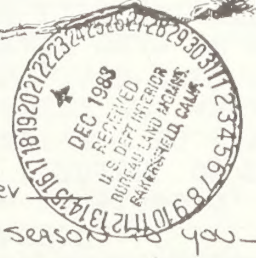
29

The following written comment (#29) has been typed to improve legibility:

This area is only good for tourist travel but we want to keep travel in the state alive in natural scenery. I would live in Mono Co. if I could afford it. Please preserve. Please act immediately.

Agnes Konberg
1931 McKinley
Corning, CA 96021

December 20, 1983 87



Greetings Mr. Rheiner

The best of the season to you—

87.1 This communication is to confirm my personal support for several BLM Wilderness Designation proposals in the eastern Sierra - eastern California area.

I support the following designated locations and sincerely request your assistance toward their successful inclusion under wilderness protection.

1.) Cerro Gordo — 14,227 acres of the western slope of the Inyo Mtns.

2.) Southern Inyo — 27,420 acres on the western slope of the Inyo Mtns. from Cerro Gordo north to Mt. Inyo.

3.) Sacatar — 11,447 acres above Seodie

and Kennedy Meadow.

Another area of concern is Monache Meadow — & its increasing vulnerability to powerful timber interests.

87.2 And lastly I also urge consideration of Wilderness Designation for the eastern Sierra escarpment between Wonoga Peak and Lone Pine Peak, including the canyons of Lubken, Diaz, and Tuttle Creeks.

I would be pleased to meet with you in Bakersfield, if you like, at your convenience to discuss these concerns, etc. and their rationale.

Meanwhile, a genuine good wish to you for the holidays.

Respectfully, David Kruger

Response 87.1

The EIS Proposed Action has been modified with respect to the Cerro Gordo WSA. See page 1 for discussion concerning selection of the Proposed Action for the Cerro Gordo WSA.

Response 87.2

These areas are not Bureau administered and are outside the scope of this EIS.

WM. J. LADEN
1002 SEPTEMBER DR.
CUPERTINO, CA 95014

DEC. 16, 1983

ROBERT D. RHEINER, JR
BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT BLM
800 TRUXTUN AVE., ROOM 302
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

DEAR MR. RHEINER:

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR WSAs IN INYO, MONO AND ALPINE COUNTIES. I RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE 2, THE ALL-WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE. ONLY BY STUDYING ALL NINETEEN AREAS IN DETAIL CAN THE BLM MAKE PROPER DECISIONS ON THE WILDERNESS VALUES OF THESE WILD AREAS.

SINCERELY,

William J. Laden

5-65

COUNTY OF MONO
Office of the . . . BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COURTHOUSE · BRIDGEPORT · CALIFORNIA · 93517

AL LEYDECKER
District No. 1
P. O. BOX 7039
MAMMOTH LAKES, CA 93546
RES. (619) 934-2658

October 24, 1983

Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtew Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

RE: 8500, 1601 (C-013.4)

Dear Sir:

I am writing to express my disagreement with your proposed alternative as expressed in the DEIS on the Benton-Owens Valley-Bodie-Coleville Study Areas. I am disturbed that in Mono County, an area where recreation is almost the only economic resource and where wilderness areas serve as a major attraction for summer visitors, the B.L.M. has made no recommendation for the designation of a Wilderness Area.

4.1 I am especially concerned about two areas. The first is the possibility of combining the recommendations of alternative III, i.e. Chidago Canyon, Volcanic Tableland and Fish Slough along with the small corridor separating the first two to create a wilderness area of approximately 38,620 acres. This area would have outstanding scenic quality . . . with exceptional views of the White's and Sierra's . . . and also help preserve the volvanic landforms which resulted from the catastrophic Long Valley eruption of 700,000 years ago. Placed as it is in proximity to Bishop and at a relatively low elevation, it would provide an excellent area for winter backpacking. I believe that these areas are eminently qualified for wilderness designation and would urge you to include them as such in the proposed alternative in the final EIS.

The other area that I am concerned with is the Granite Mountains. A wilderness area in line with the recommendations in Alternative III would make a valuable neighbor to the proposed Mono Lake Scenic Area.

4.2 I am bothered by the remarks in the DEIS on the potential for geothermal development on all of the areas I've referred to. Proximity to a KGRA does not mean "moderate" potential and being within the KGRA does not mean "high" potential. These might have been valid assumptions 10 years ago, but subsequent exploration has shown almost no potential in these areas. Exploratory well results around Mono Lake and the subsequent bids on leases will bear out my contention that if there is any potential at all it would have to be regarded as quite low.

I would urge the B.L.M. to modify the preferred alternative to include these areas as proposed wilderness.

4.3 As an aside, I could not help notice that on the list of locations at which people could review this document there is no location in Mammoth Lakes. As Mammoth is the largest community on this side of the Sierra Nevada, I feel that this is a serious omission. As a Supervisor representing this community, I would appreciate it if you could send a copy to the Mammoth Branch of the Mono County Library and would urge you to add this location to your list for future EIS's.

Sincerely,

Al Leydecker
Supervisor, Mono County
First Supervisorial District

AL:slb

Response 4.1

The corridor identified is between Chidago Canyon WSA and Fish Slough WSA. This corridor was considered during the wilderness inventory process and did not meet the criteria established in the wilderness study process. The corridor is separated from each of the adjacent WSAs by vehicle routes that are considered to be roads. See discussion in Chapter 1 under Alternatives Considered But Dropped From Consideration on page 1-55.

Response 4.2

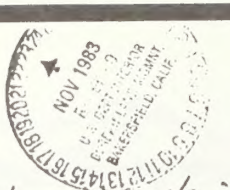
Mineral potential assessments were based on BLM inventories, literature searches and the GEM Reports (April 1983). In Chapter 3 - Affected Environment, a discussion of the mineral and energy characteristics including potential for occurrence of mineral/energy resources and development potential is presented for each WSA. For WSAs recommended as suitable for wilderness designation a more detailed assessment (Mineral Report) will be prepared jointly by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines.

Response 4.3

Review copies of the DEIS were sent to individuals upon request. The Mammoth Library has been added to the mailing list.

Response 28.1

Suitability recommendations considered current available minerals information, the GEM Reports (April 1983) being the primary source. Areas recommended as suitable will be analyzed more completely by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines to provide more in-depth information as to the mineral potential for each area and any trade-offs to be made as a result of wilderness designation.



28

Dear Sir.

I have been prospecting in the Sierras, and the Inyo and White Mountains since 1936.

There are a lot of good prospects that will no doubt be worked if it is not locked away into Wilderness. Just because a prospect is not being actively worked Now, does not mean it is no good. When conditions are right, someone will want to work it.

28.1 There is a big lime and Granite Contact Northwest of Eureka Valley That is well Mineralized with Copper, some Tungsten, Monazite, and some Gold. It runs for Miles in a North west direction and appears to Cross Deep Springs Valley on the West side, Then it runs up into The White Mountains.

Northwest of Eureka Valley There is a Shaft on This Contact That is 1,800 feet deep. It was Named The Loretta. This proves That the Mineralization runs deep. It is a Copper Mine.

I also beleive it is wrong to turn any lava or Tuffa flow into Wilderness. Like The Tuffa flow North of Bishop. Who knows what lies underneath? Where the Granite does outcrop on Casa Diablo Mountain, there was a good Gold Mine. Scientists are finding New ways to prospect for Minerals. One of these days They will be able to detect Mineral under a lava flow.

C.E. Lindner P.O. Box 663
Bishop, CA. 93514

12/3/83

46

Att: R. D. Rheiner, Jr.

I urge you support Alternative III of the DEIS for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas.

Sincerely,

Patrick E. McSweeney

5-67

30

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District

November 27, 1983

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

30.1 I understand that the BLM is only going to consider designation of three out of 19 possible Wilderness Study Areas in your district. I think this is a serious mistake, and that you should select Alternative 2 in the new EIS, which would designate much greater acreage as wilderness. Some critical areas you have proposed to delete from wilderness protection include Independence and Symmes Creeks (near possible USFS wilderness), Crater Mountain (critical deer habitat), Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tablelands, and Casa Diablo which contain important cultural resources; important wildlife habitat east of Mono Lake, pronghorn antelope habitat in the Bodie Hills, and the Slinkard WSA, which is adjacent to the Carson Iceberg roadless area and contains peregrine nest habitat. I urge you to replace all these areas in the wilderness study process, and to propose their designation as Wilderness to Congress.

sincerely,

Gerald H. Meral

Gerald H. Meral

Response 30.1

See Response 20.1.

Page 1.

Harry Metzger
227 Ashlar Drive
Napa, CA 94558

10

Nov. 3, 1983

Subject — Recommendation for Alternative III Partial Wilderness — 158,219 Acres Suitable for Wilderness Designation in the BLM Bishop and Caliente Areas.

Dear Mr. BLM Manager Rheiner,

1. Please recommend the following BLM — WSA areas to the Congress for Wilderness Status —

Alternative III — Partial Wilderness

(a) Sacatar Meadows — 15,060 Acres
(b) Cerro Gordo — 14,222 Acres
(c) Southern Inyo — 27,420 Acres
(d) Crater Mountain — 6,165 Acres
(e) Chidago Canyon — 8,326 Acres
(f) Fish Slough — 14,090 Acres
(g) Volcanic Tableland — 10,920 Acres
(h) Granite Mountains — 35,981 Acres
(i) Mt. Biedeman — 9,300 Acres
(j) Bodie Mountains — 9,970 Acres
(k) Bodie — 6,945 Acres

2. All of these wilderness study areas are qualified and suitable for Wilderness Status because —

(a) They have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work unnoticeable.

(Continued on Page 2.) Hm

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Page 2. (Continued from Page 1.)

Harry Metzger
227 Ashlar Drive
Napa, CA 94558

Nov. 3, 1983

2.(b) They have outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation.

(c) They have more than 5,000 acres of land each.

(d) They contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

(e) They protect pure water sources.

(f) They support wild, native California plants and animals.

(g) They preserve prehistoric California.

(h) They provide livestock grazing and wild game hunting.

3. I hope that we can save these beautiful areas from development, exploitation, and destruction for our future generations of Americans.

4. Please use this letter for your BLM wilderness program.

5. Thank you Sir,

Mr. BLM Manager Rheiner.

Sincerely Yours,

Harry Metzger.

Response 10.1

Your comments and the factors you've raised have been considered. The Proposed Action has been chosen for reasons identified in Chapter 2.

27

163 Del Monte Ave.
Los Altos, CA 94022
Nov. 27, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Ave. Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner, Jr:

I understand that the BLM has issued a draft environmental impact statement for 19 Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono and Alpine counties, proposing to designate only portions of three of the WSA's as suitable for wilderness designation.

I recommend Alternative 2, the all wilderness alternative. Only by studying all 19 areas in detail can the BLM make proper decisions on the wilderness values of these wild areas.

Thank you.

John Miller

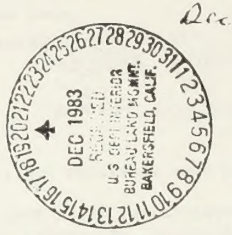
John Miller

5-69

79

Archibald F. Mills
3154 Short St.
Bishop Calif 93514
Dec 19, 1983

Robert Rheiner Jr.
District Manager BLM
800 Truxtun Ave Room 302
Bakersfield Calif 93301



Dear Mr Rheiner Jr.

I would like to have wilderness designation for Cerro Gordo, Southern Inyo, and Saccatar areas, because of the following reasons.

1 These three areas are only 18% of the originally studied areas

2 All people may enter the areas, if they leave their vehicles behind

3 Wildlife should benefit from the wilderness designation

4 Backpacking in the desert is becoming more popular

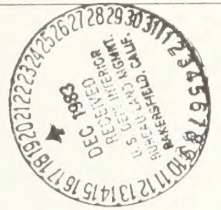
Sincerely,
Archibald F. Mills

Response 79.1

Your comments have been considered in the Final EIS analysis. However, there has been a change in the Proposed Action with respect to the Cerro Gordo WSA since the release of the DEIS. Please see page 1-39 for discussion concerning selection of the Proposed Action.

NERCO MINERALS COMPANY
111 S.W. COLUMBIA, SUITE 600
PORTLAND, OREGON 97201
TELECOPIER 503·241·2819
TELEPHONE 503·796·6600

72



NERCO

December 16, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, California 93301

Re: Comments on Draft EIS Regarding Wilderness Recommendations for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

NERCO Minerals Company, a precious metals mining and exploration company, has leased patented and unpatented mining claims located near Bodie State Historical Park. These claims are within or adjacent to the Bodie and Mt. Biedeman Wilderness Study Areas which were analyzed in the above referenced Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Bodie Wilderness Study Area (CA-010-100) contains 13 unpatented lode claims and 1 unpatented placer claim leased by NERCO Minerals Company. The Mt. Biedeman Wilderness Study Area contains 15 unpatented lode claims leased by NERCO Minerals Company. Exploration is occurring on these claims and nearby claims to determine if sufficient ore reserves exist to justify a mining operation. The ability of NERCO Minerals Company to explore and mine in the Bodie region will be hampered by designating any of these two study areas as wilderness. For this reason NERCO Minerals Company strongly urges adoption of the proposed action in the Draft EIS which recommends no wilderness for any of the two study areas.

72.1

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS.

Sincerely,

John R. Woodward
Senior Permitting Engineer

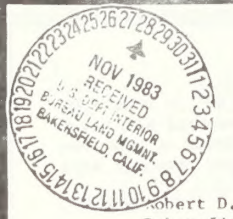
jw/wr/2080

5-70

Response 72.1

Your comments have been considered in the Final EIS analysis.

25



8558 La Jolla Shores Dr.
La Jolla, Calif., 92037
November 24, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr., Dist. Mgr.
Bakersfield District, BLM
800 Truxton Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, Calif., 93301
~~Bakers~~

Dear Mr. Rheiner;

The following comments are directed at the recently-released DEIS for 19 WSA's in Inyo, Mono and Alpine ~~area~~ counties.

I was sadly disappointed at the results of the report. Some of the prettiest, most wildlife-rich country in our state, and your department has almost totally ignored its significance! Of the given alternatives, my feelings most closely are aligned with the ideas given in Alternative 2. While all 19 areas may not deserve a wilderness recommendation, I do feel that the present 3 should be increased, perhaps by eight or ten.

The Slinkard WSA is an excellent example. A peregrine falcon nesting area, a deer fawning area, an area adjacent to the magnificent Carson-Iceberg area and one quite scenic in its own right, and you don't recommend it? I don't quite understand your reasoning. The 1964 Wilderness Act and FLPMA specifically allow and even encourage the adoption of worthy areas such as this; I urge you to reconsider.

25.1

Masonic Mountain, Bodie, Bodie Mountain, Mt. Biedeman and Mormon Meadows are similar WSA's that should be re-scrutinized. You (I, We, and all of the public) are entrusted to protect the rare plants, significant archaeological sites and valuable wildlife habitat, and the wilderness system is the best management alternative to accomplish these goals. Similar arguments hold equal weight for the Volcanic Tablelands, Casa Diablo, Fish Slough and Chidago Canyon WSAs north of Bishop.

There are amazingly few lands that we still have left, in which we still have the choice to keep our dwindling wilderness resource. Please do not preclude this option at this time. Perhaps, instead of asking "why should these areas be considered for wilderness?", it is wiser to ask, "why SHOULDN'T they be in the wilderness system?"

I sincerely hope that the final EIS addresses some of these concerns.

Best,

Frank Norris
Frank Norris

Response 25.1

See Response 20.1

65

12-11-83

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

I would like to state my strong support for Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville study areas.

I would like to see all of these Wilderness Study areas kept as wilderness.

Demetra Palamari
719 Superba Ave
Venice CA 90291

5-71

55

Susan L. Schley, M.D.
162 E. Line ~~SIXTH~~ MAY STREET
BISHOP, CALIFORNIA 93514
TELEPHONE (714) ~~873-3503~~ XXX XXXX
619 8982

December 8, 1983

Robert Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager, BLM
800 Truxtun Ave
Bakersfield, CA.

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

I am writing to urge wilderness designantion of Cerro Gordo, 14,227 acres; the area of Southern Inyo, 27,420 acres including Inyo and Keynot Peaks; and Sacatar, 11,447 acres.

I recently moved to Inyo County, approximately 18 months ago, specifically because of such areas.

Thank you for your help in preserving our wilderness.

Susan Schley

Sierra Pacific Power Company

December 19, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr., Manager
Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Re: Preliminary Wilderness Recommendations - Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Areas - Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

90.1

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the above-referenced DEIS.

Sierra Pacific Power Company has reviewed the four wilderness alternatives as they deal with the land use issue. We feel one important and critical aspect of land use is transportation and utility corridors.

Since wilderness designation would prohibit transportation and utility corridors, we cannot support any action that would adversely impact or eliminate the availability of moving valuable energy resources. Transportation and utility corridor planning is consistent with the national energy policy and multiple use management.

Therefore, Sierra Pacific only supports the following proposed wilderness actions in the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement:

I. Alternative 1 - Proposed Action

A. Areas recommended as unsuitable for wilderness designation:

a)	Independence Creek (CA-010-057)	6,250 acres
b)	Crater Mountain (CA-010-062)	7,260 acres
c)	Symmes Creek (CA-010-064)	8,180 acres
d)	Chidago Canyon (CA-010-079)	20,246 acres
e)	Fish Slough (CA-010-080)	14,450 acres
f)	Volcanic Tableland (CA-010-081)	11,840 acres
g)	Casa Diablo (CA-010-082)	9,167 acres

P. O. BOX 10100/ RENO, NEVADA 89520/ TELEPHONE 702/ 789-4011

h)	Excelsior (CA-010-088)	9,100 acres
i)	Granite Mountains (CA-010-090)	56,741 acres
j)	Walford Springs (CA-010-092)	13,200 acres
k)	Mormon Meadows (CA-010-094)	7,280 acres
l)	Mt. Biedeman	12,420 acres
m)	Bodie (CA-010-100)	15,455 acres

90.1 cont.

All of the above-mentioned wilderness units, if not recommended as unsuitable, would have a substantial impact on interstate and regional import and export capability of energy resources. An example of this is the existing 750,000 volt D.C. transmission line that runs from the Dalles Dam in Oregon to Sylmar, California. This line is considered a major north-south corridor and was so shown in the 1980 Western Regional Corridor Study. The wilderness boundaries were drawn along to the right-of-way boundaries with no thought given to future use. We see this as a serious error made early in the wilderness study process.

Sierra Pacific believes that identified major transportation and utility corridors, which include existing planned or future facilities, should not be excluded by wilderness recommendations or management plans.

Corridors, which can range from one (1) to five (5) miles in width, are a planning tool for industry and the land managers. This planning tool does conform to the intent of Section 503 of FLPMA in that it will reduce the proliferation of rights-of-way.

If in fact the above-mentioned areas return to multiple use management, Sierra Pacific would like to work with you and your staff in the development of transportation and utility corridors in these areas.

If you have any questions or are in need of additional information, please call Stephen P. Younkin at (702) 789-4747.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Sullivan
Manager, Environmental Affairs
and Right-of-Way Acquisition

MPS/cf

cc: Dick Rutledge - SCE
Stuart Gearhart - NSO BLM

Response 90.1

Your comments have been considered in the Final EIS analysis. In addition, expansion of the existing utility line corridor in Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tableland, and the Casa Diablo WSAs was taken into account during the wilderness study process. The Benton-Owens Valley MFP prescribed a half-mile wide utility line corridor for these areas. Any further expansion or new corridor development needs would require an MFP amendment, and therefore be considered as outside the scope of this wilderness EIS.

1930 O'Farrell
Reno, NV 89503
Nov. 21, 1983

Robert D. Rhesser Jr
District Mgr. BLM
Bakersfield, CA

Re: Wilderness Study Areas in Benton - Owens Valley & Bodie - Colville areas -

I certainly support the WSA's you have recommended for wilderness, but I strongly urge that other areas in this district be recommended for wilderness as well. I personally support Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative.

These areas are east of the Sierras, where we often travel for recreation purposes, i.e. hiking, fishing, wilderness experience. I have visited the Slinkard WSA, & been near many of the others, especially Sacatar Meadows - All of them deserve more careful study.

Very truly yours,
Catherine P. Smith

Southern California Edison Company
P.O. BOX 410
100 LONG BEACH BLVD.
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90801

C. J. LOWERISON, JR.
MANAGER
OF
RIGHT OF WAY AND LAND

December 23, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager, Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue, Rm. 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

SUBJECT: Benton-Owens Valley, Bodie-Coleville Study Area
Preliminary Wilderness Recommendation
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Southern California Edison Company appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above subject DEIS.

Based on our review of the DEIS and our current information, we have the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

CERRO GORDO CA-010-055

91.1 Southern California Edison Company is concerned that the southeasterly boundary of this area is in such close proximity to our distribution line located along Cerro Gordo Road as to interfere with continued vehicular access to our line from the road. Therefore modification of the boundary to assure such continued access is recommended.

CHIDAGO CANYON	CA-010-079
FISH SLOUGH	CA-010-080
VOLCANIC TABLELAND	CA-010-081
CASA DIABLO	CA-010-082

91.2 We are very pleased to see that corridor concerns are addressed; however routing flexibility to mitigate or avoid environmental sensitivities would be enhanced if the corridor width is increased from the proposed 1/2 mile to 2 miles. The need for routing flexibility has been previously recognized by the Bureau as reflected in the California Desert Plan's designation of corridors 2 to 5 miles in width. We therefore recommend boundary modification sufficient to accomodate a 2 mile corridor width.

Thank you for inviting us to review the DEIS. We hope that you will give the above comments your full consideration before finalizing the EIS. If further details are needed, please contact Mr. L. R. Salas at (213) 491-2849.

Very truly yours,

fedpermt/273/ldv

Response 91.1

The distribution line is located south of Cerro Gordo Road. This area is not in the WSA and, therefore, would not be affected by a wilderness suitability recommendation. In addition, the final EIS Proposed Action no longer recommends the Cerro Gordo unit as suitable for wilderness designation.

Response 91.2

Wilderness suitability recommendations were made with the best available information concerning minerals. This included BLM inventories, literature searches, and GEM Report (April 1983). WSAs recommended as suitable (Sacatar Meadows WSA, CA-010-127 and Southern Inyo WSA, CA-010-056) generally have no to low mineral potential except for a 1,000-acre area of CA-010-056 which contains moderate nonmetallic mineral potential and a small area of high beryl potential. However, no development of these resources is anticipated due to low development potential. For WSAs recommended as suitable, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines will prepare Mineral Reports in order to more accurately determine each WSA's actual mineral potential and related development potential. This Mineral Report will be considered in the BLM's final wilderness recommendation.

24

2443 Elendil Ln.
Davis CA 95616

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

I have read your DEIS on the 19 WSA's in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties. I do not feel that the proposal is adequate.

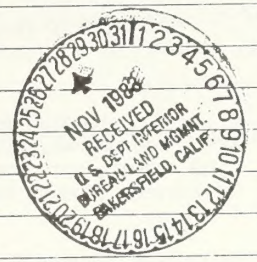
I support and recommend Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative. Only by studying all the areas in detail can a proper decision be made.

Specific areas I have visited which deserve wilderness status are: Slinkard WSA, Independence Creek WSA, Symmes Creek WSA, and Crater Mountain WSA.

Please support Alternative 2.

Thank you.

Tom Suk



5-75

83

JOHN R. SWANSON
P. O. Box 922
Berkeley, Calif. 94701

December 15, 1983.

Bureau of Land Management - Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue - Room 302
Bakersfield - California 93301

Dear Sirs:

Please accept my comments, as follows, concerning:

Wilderness Review - Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area Draft Environmental Impact Statement

I have been acquainted with these portions of California - Nevada for nearly fifty years, and have been of the firm opinion for many decades that these land areas contain outstanding wilderness, scenic, wildlife - fish, botanic and cultural resources of certain national significance. Land-water units that form an important portion of our national natural heritage. Areas that provide a vital and as all Americans hope, a lasting refuge for Man, and for all life - on this endangered planet.

I urge that the following areas - acreages be fully classified and permanently protected as Wilderness - as such each unit features superb wilderness attributes, and to be included - added - to our National Wilderness Preservation System, at this time:

- Benton Mountains 19,014.
- Cedar Ridge 19,212.
- Southern Inyo 40,463.
- Andrews Mountain Creek 9,912.
- Centennial Mountain 8,459.
- Hammil Creek 8,937.
- Chidago Canyon 24,651.
- Bald Mountain 22,184.
- Volcanic Tablelands 13,059.
- Casa Diablo 10,201.
- Sherwin 14,683.
- Granite Mountains 61,127.
- Wheeler Spring 14,418.
- Mormon Meadows 9,505.
- Mt. Biedemann 14,288.
- Bodie Mountains 28,243.
- Bodie 19,364.
- Mormon Mountains 7,539.
- Slinkard 7,913.

83.1

So per manently Bar all forms of surface and sub-surface development on all current, proposed and potential Wilderness - including all Wilderness Study Areas and other Roadless Areas.

With no Release of any Wilderness Study Areas - Roadless Areas, as they are to be added with Wilderness.

So require all Dr holdings on all Public Lands.

So Bar the use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands.

With no Disposal of any Public Lands.

And when we save Wilderness, we Save America!

Sincerely,

D. R. Swanson

Response 83.1

See Response 20.1. More accurate acreage figures for each WSA appear in the EIS summary.

8

THE SCHOOL OF LOST BORDERS
BOX 55
BIG PINE, CALIFORNIA 93513

Mr. Robert Rheiner Jr.
District Manager BLM
800 Truxtun Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, CA.

November 4, 1983

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

We understand that there are three areas near us that are up for wilderness consideration. These are the Cerro Gordo, the Southern Inyo, and the Sacatar regions. We would like to strongly support the wilderness designation. We are concerned that these areas too will be open to grazing and mining and other land destructive uses. In the last several years many other areas have been so opened that we felt strongly should have been preserved. We hope that this will not happen to the Cerro Gordo, the Southern Inyo, and the Sacatar regions.

8.1

For the last ten years we have used the deserts and mountains of Inyo County. The basis of our work involves the need for solitude. Individuals live alone for a period of time. Increased numbers of people are making use of BLM lands for this purpose.

We have personally guided over a thousand people into the mountains and deserts of Southern California. We have taught them how to walk lightly on the earth, especially the land which we still have power to keep in its native form. These 1000 people are concerned with the fate of this BLM land. We urge that the BLM help us with this deep concern.

These three areas are only 18% of the originally studied areas. Let us all do what we can to protect this land for many generations to come.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

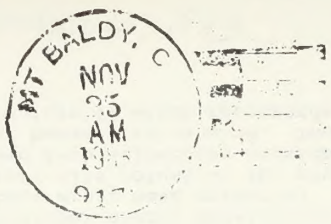
Meredith & Steven Foster

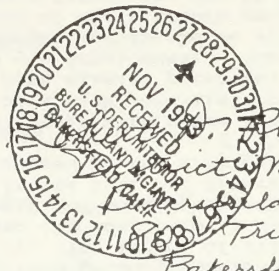
Co-Directors, School of Lost Borders

Response 8.1

The Wilderness Act allows for continued grazing and mineral development in areas designated as wilderness where there is a grandfathered right or valid existing right. The Proposed Action for the Southern Inyo WSA has been modified and now includes a Partial Wilderness recommendation for 27,420 acres as suitable for wilderness designation. See Selection of the Proposed Action and Development of Alternatives on pages 1-38 through 1-54 in Chapter 1 of the EIS.

G. Theotig
P.O. Box 49
Tehachapi, Ca. 93561





D. Theiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton Ave., Room 302
Bakersfield, Ca.
93301

11-24-83

(21)

Sir:

I am disappointed to learn that only portions of 3 WSAs are deemed suitable by the BLM for wilderness designation.

I recommend Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative. We are in need of more wilderness areas — I'm a backpacker, using wilderness areas every summer. My experience is that more people choose a wilderness experience every year.

I support more wilderness areas!

Sincerely,
Georgette Theotig

5-77

Refering to
Your letter 9500
1601 (G-013.4)

1

October 4, 1983

Bureau of Land Management:

I am opposed to designating any of the 19 areas in the Bishop, Caliente, & Walker Resource reas as wilderness. Wilderness designation denies access to many people who may not be physically able to be a backpacker or horseback rider or not have enough time for these activities. It also denies all those who enjoy ORV use.

There are plenty of existing wilderness areas throughout the state for those wanting that type of recreation.

Sincerely
Paul R. Thomes
1 Maier Lane
Petaluma, CA
94952

92

Molycorp, Inc.
Domestic Exploration Department
94 Inverness Terrace East, Suite 200
P.O. Box 3976
Englewood, Colorado 80155
Telephone (303) 790-7600

union 76 MOLYCORP

Head Office
P.O. Box 54945
Los Angeles, California 90054
(213) 977-7634

December 21, 1983

Mr. Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Avenue - R 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

92.1

These comments constitute the response of Molycorp, Inc. to the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville study areas. Molycorp, Inc. is engaged in exploration for hard minerals on public lands.

In view of the fact that wilderness areas designated after December 31, 1983 will be withdrawn from appropriation under the mining and leasing laws, we believe that all areas with mineral and energy potential should be excluded from wilderness designation even though no presently economic deposit is now known. The withdrawal limitations will preclude the collection of new data, and new areas of mineral potential will not be found. With new discoveries effectively stopped, the policy of excluding all currently known mineral potential from wilderness should be followed so that exploration of these areas will not be restricted and minerals might yet be produced. Explorationists tend to look at the long term because the lead time of discovery may be ten to fifteen years. The impact of wilderness on minerals should be assessed over the long term (a century or more). We believe that land use decisions should be in conformity with the policy statements made in the National Minerals Program Plan and Report to Congress released by the President in April, 1982.

Several areas within the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area have high potential for geothermal energy development as well as high mineral potential. Other areas have potential for oil and gas development. These areas with potential for any of these commodities should be withdrawn from wilderness consideration because of their future potential benefit to mankind. Therefore, Molycorp favors the use of Alternative IV which recommends

92.1 cont.

all areas nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft environmental impact statement for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville study areas.

Sincerely,

Gregory P. Wittman
Geologist

GPW/bv

cc: John Wells
W. Glen Zinn

Response 92.1

Wilderness suitability recommendations were made with the best known minerals information available at the time. WSAs recommended as suitable generally have no or low mineral potential except for a 1,000-acre area of CA-010-056 which contains moderate nonmetallic mineral potential and a small area of high beryl potential (see Chapter 2 recommendation rationale for further information). In addition, upon approval by the Secretary of the Interior, the WSAs would undergo an in-depth mineral survey by Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey in order to more accurately determine each area's actual mineral potential and related development potential.

December 12, 1983

BLM
Bakersfield, CA.

To: Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.

NO - you must do a WSA for ALL nineteen areas in Inyo, Mono, + Alpine counties. It is already so difficult to give my student a truely diverse experience of wildlife. If you continue to let #4 take over wilderness areas, the next generation will have little left of nature + every right to hate us from cheating them of seeing, feeling, + appreciating the wilderness. Please support total WSA in all 19 areas.

Joan Vasquez
528 W. Dexter
Porterville, Ca. 93257

5-79

CRAWFORD & COMPANY

NOV 1983 RECEIVED U.S. DEPT. INTERIOR BUREAU LAND MGMNT. BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

NEIL D. VEDDER, III.
ADJUSTER-IN-CHARGE

TELEPHONE: (714) 873-5359

314 WEST LINE ST., SUITE D
P.O. BOX 307
BISHOP, CALIFORNIA 93514

November 1, 1983

• Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxton Ave.
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

• Attn: Mr. Rheiner, Dist. Manager

Dear Sir:

7.1 I was not able to attend the public hearings on the Inyo County Wilderness Areas held in Bishop on 10-27-83 as I was out of town.

I would like to express my sincere interest and regard for the wilderness proposal before you. I understand that the subject land has little, if any, mineral value. Too often, corporate interests are considered over estheric interests as developers, etc., wield considerable influence over the legislators. It is up to the little guy and the regulatory agencies to defend nature and beauty for its own sake.

I am not a special interest group, I am merely a concerned citizen who wishes to place his opinion on record, for undeveloped nature, which, I understand, is only about 1% of the total land area of America.

Thank you,

Neil Vedder
Neil D. Vedder

NDV:nv

Response 7.1

Your comments have been considered in the analysis for this Final EIS. As Chapter 3 shows, mineral values are varied throughout the EIS area.

63

December 12, 1983

Gary Vesperman
1259 El Camino Real Suite 306
Menlo Park, CA 94025-4298

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
Bureau of Land Management
300 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

Please add the following comments to the environmental impact statement for nineteen Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties.

I want all 19 wilderness study areas set aside as wilderness. That is, I am recommending "Alternative 2".

By coincidence, I had seen the movie "Heat and Dust" last night. The shots of the Indian countryside revealed a land that is impoverished and barren. I remember a lecture from college in a course on meteorology that explained how it happened that way.

For a raindrop to form and fall, the moisture in the air coalesces around a single particle of dust. But if a cubic volume of air contains too many dust particles, none of the potential raindrops are able to collect enough moisture to fall. Thus a dustbowl, once established, is trapped in a vicious cycle: Too much dust causes too little rain which causes more dust to blow into the air. The only way to break the cycle is to leave the land alone and let it grow grass, weeds, and brush. (I notice the goats in the movie chewing up pathetic remnants of vegetation.)

Establishing wilderness areas and leaving them alone is one method of forestalling dustbowl conditions.

Rather than repeat my information from the California Wilderness Coalition and castigate you people for not designating certain areas as WSA's even though they may contain rare plants and animal habitats and so on, let me urge you to take the long term view. My lifetime and yours are miniscule compared with geological times of millenia and millenia. We Americans have no right to destroy everything in sight and leave it the way it looks as in the movie. Please see the movie and reexamine your stewardship of the lands that you administer.

Have a nice holiday.

Gary Vesperman

5-80

MALIBU, CALIFORNIA

Beautiful view near Pirates Cove in one of the Southland's most beautiful beach areas.

Photo by Walker Brothers Creations

Dear Mr. Rheiner, Jr.,
Please consider recommending Alternative 2, the all-Wilderness proposal for the Benton-Owens Valley / Bodie-Coleville study areas. It is imperative that we place these critical wild areas into protection for all of the future to enjoy instead of just the few that would exploit it.
Thank you so much. Sincerely
David Wilson
Box 631, Malibu, CA. 90265

Dist. by Mitock Publishers, Inc.,
7410 Greenbush Ave., North Hollywood, Calif. 91605

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POST CARD

50

USA 20c

DEC 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxtun Ave,
Room 302
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

42

1069 Diamond St.
San Diego, Ca
Nov. 22, 1983

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton, Rm. 302
Bakersfield, Ca

Dear Sir,

I strongly support Alternative 2 of the draft environmental impact statement for nineteen Wilderness Study Areas in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties. Only a thorough study of all nineteen areas can establish their suitability for wilderness.

I recommend these specific provisions of the draft plan:

1) Wilderness status for the Cerro Gordo, Sacatar Meadows, and Southern Inyo WSAs
2) Wilderness protection for the Mormon Meadows, Mt. Biedeman, Bodie Mountain, Bodie, and Masonic Mountain WSAs
3) Wilderness status for the Chidago Canyon, Fish Slough, Volcanic Tablelands, and Casa Diablo WSAs

Sincerely yours,

John R. Wullich
John R. Wullich

5-81

80

December 19,1983

Mr. Robert Rheiner Jr.
District Manager BLM,
800 Truxtun Ave.
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

It is rather discouraging to see the small amount of acreage deemed suitable for Wilderness that has been retained in your Draft EIS for the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area. The continuing population growth in the State of California indicates need for additional Wilderness areas. Your District could provide for that growth.

Management Alternative I is a "bare bones" inadequate solution to the problem. Alternate III would be a viable compromise between Alts II and IV and would better provide for future needs.

80.1 Should a National Emergency arise,Congress could quickly set aside the Wilderness classification if deemed necessary. Consequently nothing is being "locked up" that would now be classified as Wilderness. Thus specifically being opened up to People Use - scientists,photographers, hunters, back-packers,etc.- for a close encounter with the beauties of Natures realm, leaving vehicles and bulldozers at the threshold.

80.2 Wilderness designation would help preserve the Archaeological elements in the area from further looting and shield wildlife and habitat from harassment and erosional destruction by 4x4 operators and off-road vehicles. Research in the area by Dr. C.W.Fergusen of the Univ. Arizona Tree Ring Lab some years ago, indicated that additional study of Bristlecone Pines there should be made. Wilderness status would help protect them for further study.

80.3 The Invo County Supervisors Resolution for "no more Wilderness", primarily due to mining interest pressure, does not hold water. The Southern Invo Range and the two recommended WSAs in particular, have experienced prospecting and development for over a hundred years. If ther were any minerals left to exploit they would have been found by now. And those that have been are of too low a value for a prudent man to operate.

Revenue to the County would be minimal from mining. No Royalties accrue, no property tax (land under Federal ownership), small return from equipment assessed value, and County liable for essential Services. Under Wilderness no County Services necessary and present Federal in-lieu taxes continue coming to County. As you can see - benefits of Wilderness far outweigh the Countys claim for no more Wilderness.

The real value to the County of the area is in the form of Wilderness. As 85% of the Countys economy is derived from Tourism and Recreation, one must say that the Supervisors Resolution is very shortsighted. Wilderness is a vital element of the Recreation Industry.

80.4 I recommendAlternate III as an equitable solution for Wilderness in the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Draft EIS. Having utilized these areas for the last twenty years for daytime hikes off the primative access roads, know that they are de-facto wilderness and because of increased vehicle use will not stay that way for long without a Wilderness designation.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Norman Weller
Rt. 2 Box 150A
Bishop, Calif.
93514

cc: Mr.Jim Morrison
Mr. Ed Hasty
Senator Cranston
Senator Wilson
Congressman Lewis

Response 80.1

This information is noted in the "Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources" section in Chapter 4.

Response 80.2

The FEIS has been reformatted to identify special features such as cultural values, etc. Where projected resource uses such as mining, ORV use, etc., may potentially impair these special features, they were identified as issues. As an issue, impacts to these special features were addressed on a WSA-by-WSA basis.

Response 80.3

In the FEIS the Proposed Action for the Southern Inyo WSA is for Partial Wilderness. Mineral potentials for this WSA range from no potential to a low potential throughout the majority of the WSA. However, some moderate potential for metallic minerals does exist, which would not be within the portion of the WSA recommended as suitable. In Chapter 2, a mineral development scenario for each WSA including the Southern Inyo WSA has been prepared based on the potential for occurrence of mineral resources and the development potential of these resources. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the impacts of wilderness designation or nondesignation on mineral development for each WSA in which mineral development is considered an issue.

Response 80.4

See Response 19.1.

5

October 24, 1983

Mr. Robert Rheiner Jr.
District Manager BLM
800 Truxton Ave Rm 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:
I wish to comment on the proposed Inyo Mountains (Cerro Gordo) and Southern Inyo Wilderness Areas.
I am totally in favor of these areas being deemed wilderness areas. Their unique beauty and resources need all the protection America can provide.

Thank you.

Judy L. Wickman
S.R. Box 20
Independence, CA 93526

2

Dwight M. Willard
ATTORNEY AT LAW
1074 Neilson Street
Albany, California 94706
415 527-7673

October 6, 1983

Bureau of Land Management
800 Truxton Ave., Rm. 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

RE: 8500, 1601 (C-013.4), Wilderness Study Draft EIS

Dear Sir or Madam,

2.1 While I support the wilderness recommendations of the Benton-Owens Valley/Bodie-Coleville Study Area DEIS, I believe that additional areas should have been recommended for wilderness. I believe, in particular, that at least one wilderness area of significant size and recreational value should be recommended from among the large areas of BLM roadless land north and east of Mono Lake.

2.2 I also believe that the BLM's legal mandate to involve the public in land planning requires that nominal effort, at a minimum, be made to make the DEIS available for examination at libraries in California's urban centers. Token distribution of the DEIS to local libraries seems to be nothing less than an intentional effort to deprive the vast majority of California's users of BLM land who live in metropolitan areas the opportunity to examine the DEIS. Similiarly, a public meeting on the issue should be held in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles area. The concerned public far outnumbers the few people who will be able to attend October meetings in Bishop or Markleeville.

Yours,

Dwight M. Willard

Dwight M. Willard

5-83

Response 2.1

The Proposed Action and alternatives for each WSA were developed through the BLM's planning process that included public scoping. Additional factors considered in the selection of the Proposed Action for each WSA included wilderness values, other resource values, potential conflicts, and manageability. See Chapter 1 - Selection of the Proposed Action and Development of Alternatives pages 1-38 through 1-54 for information specific to each WSA.

Response 2.2

In an effort to reduce printing costs, copies of the DEIS were sent to public libraries within the EIS area where the greatest interest was anticipated. Copies were sent to individuals residing outside the vicinity of these libraries upon request. With respect to meeting locations, all comments, either oral or written, have received consideration in the EIS process. Meeting site determinations were based on areas of greatest potential effects from the wilderness proposals.

11-6-83 9

Mr. Robert Ruehmerle.
District Mgr BLM
800 Truxton Ave. Rm 302
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

Mr. Rheiner

I urge Wilderness definition for the Lemo Gorge, Southern Inyo, and Sacatar study areas. I have walked extensively in the Southern Inyo area around Newark Butte & Pat Keyes trail.

Economically it is important to me to have some areas of desert designated wilderness. I own a Mountaineering / Backpacking store and people who use these areas are my customers.

Thank you for your time.

James Wilson
PO Box 862
Bishop, CA
93514

5-84

15

Thomas Winnett

2440 Bancroft Way
Berkeley, California 94704
Phone: 843-8080

11/22/83

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
Bakersfield District, BLM
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Mr. Rheiner:

I am writing you about the BLM environmental impact statement for 19 Wilderness Study Areas in Alpine, Mono and Inyo Counties.

From 62 years as a Californian and an outdoor person, I feel that Alternative 2 for these study areas should be implemented. When Europeans first came to America, the whole place was wilderness. Now only 1% of the U.S. is wilderness. Surely we can spare a few acres more to nurture the values that wilderness holds for modern man.

Sincerely,

Thomas Winnett

5-85

Robert D. Rheiner, Jr.
District Manager
Bakersfield District
800 Truxton Ave, Room 302
Bakersfield, CA 93301

17

I support Alternative 2, the all-wilderness alternative, for the Benton-Owens Valley / Bodie-Coleville Study Areas. I have spent many vacations in these areas and feel they deserve complete protection.

Nancy Woods
643 Whiting
El Segundo, CA
90245

43

12-3-83

Dear Mr. Rheiner,

I realize that economic development is important. But equally or more so, is the protecting of our environment. As life gets more hectic and tense, quiet beautiful places to go and enjoy with family and friends became all that more important. The environment also serves to reconnect us to what's really important — life, simplicity, peace, family and friends

I strongly urge you to consider giving support for Alternative III of the DEIS for the Benton-Owens Valley / Bodie-Coleville study area

Thank you,
Robert W. Zachary

5-86

14

Robert D. Rheiner Jr.
District Manager
B.L.M. - Bakersfield District

11/23/83

Dear Sir,

I am writing to comment on your draft E.I.S. for the Nineteen Wilderness Study Areas. I find your recommendation of only 53,089 acres out of 296,216 acres possible, unacceptable. I urge you to think a little more along the lines of ecological integrity and support alternative 2. the all wilderness alternative. These 19 areas have many important wilderness values that must be looked at carefully during any decision making process. In the name of proper and wise land use management I urge you to support alternative 2 and protect these vital W.S.A.

Thank you for your time.

Steve Zachary
739 N. Oak St.
Ukiah, Ca. 95482

62

12/10/83

Robert D. Rhoinor Jr.
B.L.M. District Manager
Bakersfield, Ca. 93301

Dear Sir.

I am writing to offer a few valuable comments concerning the draft E.I.S. for those 19 W.S.A's in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties. Having explored and hiked in that part of California for years I feel you would be making a grave mistake as a public land manager to ignore the wilderness values of those 19 areas. Looking at your proposal it looks like you have done just that. By your recommendations it is clear that you have not yet grasped the significance of managing land in an ecological way. Do you not look to the future? I think you have underestimated the wilderness values of those areas. I urge you to support Alternative 2, the all wilderness alternative. Surely you have some integrity to realize that by studying those 19 W.S.A's in more detail is the only way proper decisions can be made concerning these wilderness values. Please give more thought to supporting alternative 2. Thank you for your time (over)

And would you please send me a map of your district which identifies the 19 W.S.A's. or copy of draft E.I.S.

Sincerely,

Steve Zachary
739 N. Oak St.
Ukiah, Ca. 95482

5-87

List of Preparers

LIST OF PREPARERS

Name	Position	Education	Professional Experience
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Glossary

GLOSSARY

ACRONYMS

ACEC - Area of Critical Environmental Concern

BLM - Bureau of Land Management

CDCA - California Desert Conservation Area

CDF&G - California Department of Fish and Game

CRMP - Cultural Resource Management Plan

EIS - Environmental Impact Statement

FLPMA - Federal Land Policy and Management Act

GEM - Geology-Energy-Mineral

GRA - Geology-Energy-Mineral Resource Area

KGRA - Known Geothermal Resource Area

LADWP - Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

MFP - Management Framework Plan

NCLWMA - National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area

NWPS - National Wilderness Preservation System

ORV - Off-Road Vehicle

USFS - United States Forest Service

WMP - Wilderness Management Policy

WSA - Wilderness Study Area

ANIMAL UNIT MONTH (AUM): The amount of forage required to sustain the equivalent of one cow or five sheep for one month.

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC): Areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

CHERRYSTEM: A boundary configuration in which the boundary of a wilderness study area or proposed wilderness is drawn around a dead-end road or other linear feature so as to exclude that road or feature from the wilderness study area or proposed wilderness.

CHERRYSTEM ROAD: A dead-end road excluded from wilderness study by means of a cherrystem.

CONTIGUOUS: Lands or legal subdivisions having a common boundary; lands having only a common corner are not contiguous.

DISCOVERY: A term used in connection with mining claims. As stated in legal ruling which has been upheld in many later decisions, it is "where minerals have been found and the evidence is of such a character that a person of ordinary prudence would be justified in the further expenditure of his labor and means, with a reasonable prospect of success, in developing a valuable mine. . . ."

ECOSYSTEM: A complex self-sustaining natural system which includes living and nonliving components of the environment and the interactions that bind then together. Its functioning involves the circulation of matter and energy between organisms and their environment.

ECOTONE: A transition area between two adjacent ecological communities usually exhibiting competition between organisms common to both.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Any species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, as identified in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

FLPMA: The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579, 90 Stat. 2743,43 USC 1701).

FORAGE: All browse and herbaceous foods that are available to grazing animals. It may be grazed or harvested for feeding.

HABITAT: All elements of an organism's environment needed to complete its life cycle through reproduction, including but not limited to food, cover, water, and living space in the amounts, qualities, and locations which the organism requires to complete its life cycle.

IMPACT: The effect, influence, alteration, or imprint of an activity.

IMPAIR: To diminish in value or excellence.

KNOWN GEOTHERMAL RESOURCE AREA (KGRA): An area in which the geology, nearby discoveries, competitive interests, or other indicia would, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Interior, engender a belief in persons who are experienced in the subject matter that the prospects for extraction of geothermal steam or associated geothermal resources are good enough to warrant expenditures of money for that purpose. (From Code of Federal Regulations (Title 43, Part 1000 to 3999, Pg. 436), Office of Federal Register, Washington D.C., 1981.)

LIVESTOCK GRAZING OPERATIONS: Those operations under permit where the primary purpose is the grazing of livestock for the production of food and fiber. Includes pack and saddle stock used in conjunction with such operations.

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN (MFP): The Bureau's basic planning decision document prior to the adoption of a new planning process in 1979, in which the decision document is a Resource Management Plan (RMP).

MFP AMENDMENT: An amendment to a Management Framework Plan is initiated by the need to consider monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances, or an applicant's proposed action which may result in a significant change in a portion of the approved plan.

MINERAL ENTRY: The right to enter the public lands (under the administration of the BLM) to search for minerals and to claim or lease such minerals under the mining and mineral leasing laws and regulations.

MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT: Any machine activated by nonliving power source except small battery-powered handcarried devices such as flashlights, shavers, Geiger counters, and cameras. Also Mechanized Equipment.

MOTOR VEHICLE: Any vehicle which is self-propelled or any vehicle which is propelled by electric power obtained from batteries.

MULTIPLE RESOURCE VALUES AND USES: The present and potential uses of the various resources administered through multiple use management on the public lands and any public values associated with such uses.

MULTIPLE USE: "...the management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; the use of some lands for less than all of the resources; a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that take into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values; and harmonious and coordinatedmanagement of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output." (From section 103, FLPMA.)

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE LAND AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS (NCLWMAs): Established by Public Land Orders in the early 1960s, these lands were withdrawn from disposal under the nonmineral public land laws, in order to protect significant or unique wildlife values. These areas are managed under cooperative agreements between BLM and the California Department of Fish and Game.

NATURALNESS: Refers to an area which "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable." (From section 2(c), Wilderness Act.)

NONSUITABLE FOR PRESERVATION AS WILDERNESS: Refers to a recommendation that certain Federal lands satisfy the definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act but have been found not to be appropriate for designation as wilderness on the basis of an analysis of the existing and potential uses of the land.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV): Any motorized vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other terrain.

OUTSTANDING: 1. Standing out among others of its kind; conspicuous; prominent. 2. Superior to others of its kind; distinguished; excellent.

PATENTED MINING CLAIM: A claim on which title has passed from the Federal Government to the mining claimant under the mining laws.

PLANNING AREA: The area for which resource management plans are prepared and maintained. In most instances, it is the same as the resource area, which is a geographic portion of a BLM district, under supervision of an area manager.

PLANNING CRITERIA: The factors used to guide development of the resource management plan, or revision, to ensure that it is tailored to the issues previously identified and to ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are developed to guide the collection and use of inventory data and information, the analysis of the management situation, the design and formulation of alternatives, the estimation of the effects of alternatives, the evaluation of alternatives, and the selection of the preferred alternative.

POPULATION CENTER: A Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) which has a population of 100,000 or greater. An SMSA is a county which contains at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more plus as many adjacent counties as are metropolitan in character and are socially integrated with that central city or cities.

PRE-FLPMA: Before October 21, 1976, the date of approval of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

PRELIMINARY WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION: Refers to a wilderness recommendation at any stage prior to the time when the Secretary of the Interior reports his recommendation to the President. Until the Secretary acts, the recommendation is "preliminary" because it is subject to change during administrative review.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION: Nonmotorized and nondeveloped types of outdoor recreational activities.

PUBLIC LANDS: For the purpose of the wilderness review program, any lands and interest in lands owned by the United States within the several States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except:

1. Lands where the United States owns the minerals but the surface is not Federally owned.

2. Lands being held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos.

3. Lands tentatively approved for State selection in Alaska.

4. Lands on the Outer Continental Shelf.

5. Oregon and California grant (O & C) lands that are managed for commercial timber production.

RANGELAND IMPROVEMENTS: Any structural or nonstructural improvements which directly affect or support the use of the forage resource by domestic livestock, such as fences, line cabins, water lines, and stock tanks.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP): The basic decision document of BLM's resource management planning process, used to establish allocation and coordination among uses for the various resources within a Resource Area. An RMP is a "land-use plan" prescribed by Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. RMP regulations appear at 43 CFR 1601. (Refer to definition of Management Framework Plan.)

RIPARIAN: Situated on or pertaining to the bank of a river, stream, or other body of water. Normally used to refer to plants of all types that grow along streams or around springs.

ROAD: A vehicle route which has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use.

SMSA: Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area - See definition under "Population Center."

SOLITUDE: 1. The state of being alone or remote from habitations; isolation. 2. A lonely, unfrequented, or secluded place.

STOCKING RATE: The degree to which a grazing unit is stocked with livestock, usually expressed in AUMs. The stocking rate may be more or less than the carrying capacity of the grazing unit.

SUBSTANTIALLY UNNOTICEABLE: Refers to something that either is so insignificant as to be only a very minor feature of the overall area or is not distinctly recognizable by the average visitor as being manmade or man-caused because of age, weathering, or biological change. An example of the first would be a few minor dams or abandoned mine buildings that are widely scattered over a large area, so that they are an inconspicuous part of the scene. Serious intrusions of this kind, or many of them, may preclude inclusion of the land in a wilderness study area. An example of the second would be an old juniper control project that has grown up to a natural appearance, the old fallen trees largely decomposed.

SUITABILITY: As used in the Wilderness Act and in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, refers to a recommendation by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture that certain Federal lands satisfy the definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act and have been found appropriate for designation as wilderness on the basis of an analysis of the existing and potential uses of the land.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES: Values that may be present in an area under consideration for wilderness, such as ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. They are not required for wilderness designation, but their presence will enhance an area's wilderness quality.

VALID MINING CLAIM: A mining claim on which a discovery has been made (See "Discovery.")

WATERSHED: The area drained by a principal river or stream system.

WAY/PRIMITIVE VEHICLE ROUTES: A vehicle route which has not been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use.

WILDERNESS: The following definition as contained in section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 891): A wilderness in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

WILDERNESS AREA: An area formally designated by Act of Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS: See "Wilderness."

WILDERNESS INVENTORY: An evaluation of the public lands in the form of a written description and map showing those lands that meet the wilderness criteria as established under section 603(a) of FLPMA and section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act, which will be referred to as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).

WILDERNESS MANAGEABILITY: The capability of an area to be effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character.

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT: The management of human use and influence on lands which have been designated by Act of Congress as wilderness areas.

WILDERNESS PROGRAM: Term used to describe all wilderness activities of the Bureau of Land Management including identification, management, and administrative functions.

WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS: A recommendation by the Bureau of Land Management, the Secretary of the Interior, or the President, with respect to an area's suitability or nonsuitability for preservation as wilderness.

WILDERNESS REPORTING: The process of preparing the reports containing wilderness recommendations on wilderness study areas and transmitting those reports to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress.

WILDERNESS REVIEW: The term used to cover the entire wilderness inventory, study, and reporting phases of the wilderness program of the Bureau of Land Management.

WILDERNESS STUDY: The process which specifies how each wilderness study area must be studied through the BLM resource management planning system, analyzing all resources, values and uses within the WSA to determine whether the area will be recommended as suitable or nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA): A roadless area or island that has been inventoried and found to have wilderness characteristics as described in section 603 of FLPMA and section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 891).

WILDERNESS VALUES: See "Wilderness."

WILDLIFE IMPROVEMENTS: Any structural or nonstructural improvements which directly affect or support the use of water, food, or shelter by wildlife, such as guzzlers, water lines, or fences.

WITHDRAWAL: Removal, or withholding, of public lands by statute, or Secretarial order, from operation of some or all of the public land laws ("surface," mining and/or mineral leasing laws).

Appendix

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

SACRAMENTO ENDANGERED SPECIES OFFICE
2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1823
Sacramento, California 95825-1846

RECEIVED
BUR OF LAND MGMT
MAY 12 11 00
SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

To	Name	Initial	Date
1	SD		
	ASD		
	ADMIN		
3	RES		
	OPER		
	PA		
	Minerals		
	EEO		

Action by
Surname by
Return to

May 9, 1986

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Ed Hastey, State Director, Bureau of Land Management, California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way Sacramento, California 95825

FROM: Project Leader, Endangered Species Office, Sacramento, California 95825

SUBJECT: Consultation requirements for BLM Wilderness Designation 8500 (CA-930.1) (Case No. 1-1-86-I-321)

In response to your May 6, 1986, request for informal consultation regarding designation or non-designation of wilderness status for Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's), we concur with your statement that this process does not require formal Section 7 consultation. Any future actions on WSA's that might affect a listed species can be evaluated at proposal stage and formal consultations initiated if needed.

If you have questions regarding this reply please contact me at FTS/460-4866.

Gail C. Kobetich

cc: Chief, Endangered Species, Portland, OR 97232 (AFA-SE)

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8500
CA-930.1

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICE
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825

MAY 6 1986

Mr. Gail Kobetich, Project Leader
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sacramento Endangered Species Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Kobetich:

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management in California is preparing eleven final Wilderness EIS's during fiscal year 1986 that will analyze the environmental impacts of wilderness designation or non-designation on a total of 58 Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). We hereby initiate informal consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act concerning this matter.

Some of these WSA's provide important habitat for federally listed or proposed endangered species (for example, Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles). It has been determined by the BLM that the designation or non-designation of these areas as wilderness by Congress (at the recommendation of the BLM) will have only incidental benefit to any threatened or endangered species involved, not significant positive or negative effects.

We seek your concurrence that these wilderness designations or non-designations do not themselves require formal Section 7 consultation, but that such consultation must be initiated prior to on-the-ground implementation of activities which may affect threatened or endangered species under wilderness or non-wilderness designations.

Your prompt reply will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ed Hastey
State Director

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